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Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

DIVISION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

Pamphlet No. 23

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND SPEECHES RELATING TO PEACE PROPOSALS 1916-1917

PUBLISHED BY THE ENDOWMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C.
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PREFATORY NOTE

On December 12, 1916, the Imperial German Chancellor, von Bethmann-Hollweg, delivered an address in the Reichstag in which he stated the willingness of the German Empire, under certain conditions, to consider the question of peace with its enemies. In the same speech the Chancellor read to the Reichstag the text of a note which the Imperial Government had submitted, through certain neutral Governments, for consideration by the Entente Powers. An identical note was likewise submitted on the same date, through the same channels, by Germany's allies. The Entente Powers, by way of reply to these overtures, stated in similar official form the conditions upon which they would consider the question of peace with their enemies. Certain neutral Powers took advantage of these expressions of the respective belligerents to set forth their views as to the international situation.

It has been thought advisable at this time to collect the various official statements, and to issue them for convenience in a pamphlet, arranged in chronological order but without expression of individual opinion or commentary. The documents themselves have been taken from official sources whenever available.

JAMES BROWN SCOTT,

Director of the Division of International Law.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,

February 19, 1917.



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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS AND SPEECHES RELATING TO PEACE PROPOSALS, 1916-1917

Extract from the Speech of Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg in the German Reichstag, December 12, 1916¹

The Reichstag had been adjourned for a long period, but fortunately it was left to the discretion of the President as to the day of the next meeting. This discretion was caused by the hope that soon happy events in the field would be recorded, a hope fulfilled quicker, almost, than expected. I shall be brief, for actions speak for themselves.

[Here the Chancellor referred to the entrance of Roumania into the war, and its intended effect on the western front.]

The situation was serious. But with God's help our troops shaped conditions so as to give us security which not only is complete but still more so than ever before. The western front stands. Not only does it stand, but in spite of the Roumanian campaign it is fitted out with larger reserves of men and material than it had been formerly. The most effective precautions have been taken against all Italian diversions. And while on the Somme and on the Carso the drum-fire resounded, while the Russians launched troops against the eastern frontier of Transylvania, Field Marshal von Hindenburg captured the whole of western Wallachia and the hostile capital of Bucharest, leading with unparalleled genius the troops that in competition with all the allies made possible what hitherto was considered impossible.

And Hindenburg does not rest. Military operations progress. By strokes of the sword at the same time firm foundations for our economic needs have been laid. Great stocks of grain, victuals, oil, and other goods fell into our hands in Roumania. Their transport has begun. In spite of scarcity, we could have lived on our own supplies, but now our safety is beyond question.

To these great events on land, heroic deeds of equal importance are added by our submarines. The spectre of famine, which our enemies intended to appear before us, now pursues them without mercy. When, after the termination of the first year of the war, the Emperor addressed the nation in a public appeal, he said: "Having witnessed such great events, my heart was filled with awe and determination." Neither our Emperor nor our nation ever changed their minds in this respect.

¹*The New York Times*, December 13, 1916.

Neither have they now. The genius and heroic acts of our leaders have fashioned these facts as firm as iron. If the enemy counted upon the weariness of his enemy, then he was deceived.

The Reichstag, by means of the national auxiliary war service law, helped to build a new offensive and defensive bulwark in the midst of the great struggle. Behind the fighting army stands the nation at work—the gigantic force of the nation, working for the common aim.

The empire is not a besieged fortress, as our adversaries imagined, but one gigantic and firmly disciplined camp with inexhaustible resources. That is the German Empire, which is firmly and faithfully united with its brothers in arms, who have been tested in battle under the Austro-Hungarian, Turkish, and Bulgarian flags.

Our enemies now ascribed to us a plan to conquer the whole world, and then desperate cries of anguish for peace. But not confused by these asseverations, we progressed with firm decision, and we thus continue our progress, always ready to defend ourselves and fight for our nation's existence, for its free future, and always ready for this price to stretch out our hand for peace.

Our strength has not made our ears deaf to our responsibility before God, before our own nation, and before humanity. The declarations formerly made by us concerning our readiness for peace were evaded by our adversaries. Now we have advanced one step further in this direction. On August 1, 1914, the Emperor had personally to take the gravest decision which ever fell to the lot of a German—the order for mobilization—which he was compelled to give as a result of the Russian mobilization. During these long and earnest years of the war the Emperor has been moved by a single thought: how peace could be restored to safeguard Germany after the struggle in which she has fought victoriously.

Nobody can testify better to this than I who bear the responsibility for all actions of the Government. In a deep moral and religious sense of duty toward his nation and, beyond it, toward humanity, the Emperor now considers that the moment has come for official action toward peace. His Majesty, therefore, in complete harmony and in common with our allies, decided to propose to the hostile powers to enter peace negotiations. This morning I transmitted a note to this effect to all the hostile powers through the representatives of those powers which are watching over our interests and rights in the hostile States. I asked the representatives of Spain, the United States, and Switzerland to forward that note.

The same procedure has been adopted to-day in Vienna, Constanti-

nople, and Sofia. Other neutral States and his Holiness the Pope have been similarly informed.

[The Chancellor then read the note.¹]

Gentlemen, in August, 1914, our enemies challenged the superiority of power in the world war. To-day we raise the question of peace, which is a question of humanity. We await the answer of our enemies with that serenity of mind which is guaranteed to us by our exterior and interior strength, and by our clear conscience. If our enemies decline to end the war, if they wish to take upon themselves the world's heavy burden of all these terrors which hereafter will follow, then even in the least and smallest homes every German heart will burn in sacred wrath against our enemies, who are unwilling to stop human slaughter in order that their plans of conquest and annihilation may continue.

In the fateful hour we took a fateful decision. It has been saturated with the blood of hundreds of thousands of our sons and brothers who gave their lives for the safety of their home. Human wits and human understanding are unable to reach to the extreme and last questions in this struggle of nations, which has unveiled all the terrors of earthly life, but also the grandeur of human courage and human will in ways never seen before. God will be the judge. We can proceed upon our way.

Peace Note of Germany and Her Allies, December 12, 1916²

The most terrific war experienced in history has been raging for the last two years and a half over a large part of the world—a catastrophe which thousands of years of common civilization was unable to prevent and which injures the most precious achievements of humanity.

Our aims are not to shatter nor annihilate our adversaries. In spite of our consciousness of our military and economic strength and our readiness to continue the war (which has been forced upon us) to the bitter end, if necessary; at the same time, prompted by the desire to avoid further bloodshed and make an end to the atrocities of war, the four allied powers propose to enter forthwith into peace negotiations.

The propositions which they bring forward for such negotiations, and which have for their object a guarantee of the existence, of the honor and liberty of evolution for their nations, are, according to their

¹See *infra*.

²The *New York Times*, December 13, 1916.

firm belief, an appropriate basis for the establishment of a lasting peace.

The four allied powers have been obliged to take up arms to defend justice and the liberty of national evolution. The glorious deeds of our armies have in no way altered their purpose. We always maintained the firm belief that our own rights and justified claims in no way control the rights of these nations.

The spiritual and material progress which were the pride of Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century are threatened with ruin. Germany and her allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey, gave proof of their unconquerable strength in this struggle. They gained gigantic advantages over adversaries superior in number and war material. Our lines stand unshaken against ever-repeated attempts made by armies.

The last attack in the Balkans has been rapidly and victoriously overcome. The most recent events have demonstrated that further continuance of the war will not result in breaking the resistance of our forces, and the whole situation with regard to our troops justifies our expectation of further successes.

If, in spite of this offer of peace and reconciliation, the struggle should go on, the four allied powers are resolved to continue to a victorious end, but they solemnly disclaim responsibility for this before humanity and history. The Imperial Government, through the good offices of your Excellency, asks the Government of [here is inserted the name of the neutral power addressed in each instance] to bring this communication to the knowledge of the Government of [here are inserted the names of the belligerents].

Note of the German Government to the Vatican regarding the Peace Proposals, December 12, 1916¹

According to instructions received, I have the honor to send to your Eminence a copy of the declaration of the Imperial Government to-day, which, by the good offices of the powers intrusted with the protection of German interests in the countries with which the German Empire is in a state of war, transmits to these States, and in which the Imperial Government declares itself ready to enter into peace negotiations. The Austro-Hungarian, Turkish, and Bulgarian Governments also have sent similar notes.

¹*The New York Times*, December 13, 1916.

The reasons which prompted Germany and her allies to take this step are manifest. For two years and a half a terrible war has been devastating the European Continent. Unlimited treasures of civilization have been destroyed. Extensive areas have been soaked with blood. Millions of brave soldiers have fallen in battle and millions have returned home as invalids. Grief and sorrow fill almost every house.

Not only upon the belligerent nations, but also upon neutrals, the destructive consequences of the gigantic struggle weigh heavily. Trade and commerce, carefully built up in years of peace, have been depressed. The best forces of the nation have been withdrawn from the production of useful objects. Europe, which formerly was devoted to the propagation of religion and civilization, which was trying to find solutions for social problems, and was the home of science and art and all peaceful labor, now resembles an immense war camp, in which the achievements and works of many decades are doomed to annihilation.

Germany is carrying on a war of defence against her enemies, which aim at her destruction. She fights to assure the integrity of her frontiers and the liberty of the German Nation, for the right which she claims to develop freely her intellectual and economic energies in peaceful competition and on an equal footing with other nations. All the efforts of their enemies are unable to shatter the heroic armies of the (Teutonic) allies, which protect the frontiers of their countries, strengthened by the certainty that the enemy shall never pierce the iron wall.

Those fighting on the front know that they are supported by the whole nation, which is inspired by love for its country and is ready for the greatest sacrifices and determined to defend to the last extremity the inherited treasure of intellectual and economic work and the social organization and sacred soil of the country.

Certain of our own strength, but realizing Europe's sad future if the war continues; seized with pity in the face of the unspeakable misery of humanity, the German Empire, in accord with her allies, solemnly repeats what the Chancellor already has declared, a year ago, that Germany is ready to give peace to the world by setting before the whole world the question whether or not it is possible to find a basis for an understanding.

Since the first day of the Pontifical reign his Holiness the Pope has unswervingly demonstrated, in the most generous fashion, his solicitude

for the innumerable victims of this war. He has alleviated the sufferings and ameliorated the fate of thousands of men injured by this catastrophe. Inspired by the exalted ideas of his ministry, his Holiness has seized every opportunity in the interests of humanity to end so sanguinary a war.

The Imperial Government is firmly confident that the initiative of the four powers will find friendly welcome on the part of his Holiness, and that the work of peace can count upon the precious support of the Holy See.

**Austrian Official Statement regarding the Peace Proposals,
December 12, 1916¹**

When in the summer of 1914 the patience of Austria-Hungary was exhausted by a series of systematically-continued and ever-increasing provocations and menaces, and the monarchy, after almost fifty years of unbroken peace, found itself compelled to draw the sword, this weighty decision was animated neither by aggressive purposes nor by designs of conquest, but solely by the bitter necessity of self-defense, to defend its existence and safeguard itself for the future against similar treacherous plots of hostile neighbors.

That was the task and aim of the monarchy in the present war. In combination with its allies, well tried in loyal comradeship in arms, the Austro-Hungarian army and fleet, fighting, bleeding, but also assailing and conquering, gained such successes that they frustrated the intentions of the enemy. The Quadruple Alliance not only has won an immense series of victories, but also holds in its power extensive hostile territories. Unbroken is its strength, as our latest treacherous enemy has just experienced.

Can our enemies hope to conquer or shatter this alliance of powers? They will never succeed in breaking it by blockade and starvation measures. Their war aims, to the attainment of which they have come no nearer in the third year of the war, will in the future be proved to have been completely unattainable. Useless and unavailing, therefore, is the prosecution of the fighting on the part of the enemy.

The powers of the Quadruple Alliance, on the other hand, have effectively pursued their aims, namely, defense against attacks on their existence and integrity, which were planned in concert long since, and

¹*The New York Times*, December 13, 1916.

the achievement of real guarantees, and they will never allow themselves to be deprived of the basis of their existence, which they have secured by advantages won.

The continuation of the murderous war, in which the enemy can destroy much, but can not—as the Quadruple Alliance is firmly confident—alter fate, is ever more seen to be an aimless destruction of human lives and property, an act of inhumanity justified by no necessity and a crime against civilization.

This conviction, and the hope that similar views may also be begun to be entertained in the enemy camp, has caused the idea to ripen in the Vienna Cabinet—in full agreement with the Governments of the allied (Teutonic) powers—of making a candid and loyal endeavor to come to a discussion with their enemies for the purpose of paving a way for peace.

The Governments of Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey, and Bulgaria have addressed to-day identical notes to the diplomatic representatives in the capitals concerned who are intrusted with the promotion of enemy nationals, expressing an inclination to enter into peace negotiations and requesting them to transmit this overture to enemy States. This step was simultaneously brought to the knowledge of the representatives of the Holy See in a special note, and the active interest of the Pope for this offer of peace was solicited. Likewise the accredited representatives of the remaining neutral States in the four capitals were acquainted with this proceeding for the purpose of informing their Governments.

Austria and her allies by this step have given new and decisive proof of their love of peace. It is now for their enemies to make known their views before the world.

Whatever the result of its proposal may be, no responsibility can fall on the Quadruple Alliance, even before the judgment seat of its own peoples, if it is eventually obliged to continue the war.

Extracts from the Speech of Premier Briand in the French Chamber of Deputies, December 13, 1916¹

[TRANSLATION]

It is after proclaiming her victory on every front that Germany,

¹France: *Journal Officiel du 14 décembre 1916, Chambre—Séance du 13 décembre*, p. 3638.

feeling that she can not win, throws out to us certain phrases about which I can not refrain from making a few remarks.

You have read the speech of Mr. von Bethmann-Hollweg, the Chancellor of the German Empire. On this speech, of which I have not yet received the official text, I can not express myself officially. These so-called proposals have not yet been presented to any of the Governments, and it is rather doubtful whether, under existing conditions, those who have been asked to act as intermediaries will accept so delicate a task, which may disturb many a conscience.

On this as on all matters I cannot express an official opinion until we and our Allies have thoroughly considered and discussed the question, and reached a full and complete agreement. But I have the right, indeed the duty, to warn you against this possible poisoning of our country.

When I see Germany arming herself to the teeth, mobilizing her entire civil population at the risk of destroying her commerce and her industries, of breaking up her homes of which she is so proud; when I see the fires of all her factories burning red in the manufacture of war material; when I see her, in contravention of the law of nations, conscripting men in their own countries and forcing them to work for her, if I did not warn my country, I should be culpable indeed!

Observe, gentlemen, that what they are sending us from over there is an invitation to discuss peace. It is extended to us under conditions that are well known to you: Belgium invaded, Serbia invaded, Roumania invaded, ten of our Departments invaded! This invitation is in vague and obscure terms, in high-sounding words to mislead the minds, to stir the conscience, and to trouble the hearts of peoples who mourn for their countless dead. Gentlemen, this is a crucial moment. I discern in these declarations the same cry of conscience, ever striving to deceive neutrals and perhaps also to blind the eyes of those among the German people whose vision is still unimpaired. "It was not we," say these declarations, "who let loose this horrible war."

There is one cry constantly on German lips: "We were attacked; we are defending ourselves; we are the victims!" To this cry I make answer for the hundredth time: "No; you are the aggressors; no matter what you may say, the facts are there to prove it. The blood is on your heads, not on ours."

Furthermore, the circumstances in which these proposals are made are such that I have the right to denounce them as a crafty move, a clumsy snare. When, after reading words like the following, "We wish to give to our peoples every liberty they need, every opportunity

to live and to prosper that they may desire," I note in the same document that what our enemies so generously offer to other nations is a sort of charitable promise not to crush them, not to annihilate them, I exclaim: "Is that what they dare to offer, after the Marne, after the Yser, after Verdun, to France who stands before them glorious in her strength?"

We must think over a document like that; we must consider what it represents at the moment it is thrown at the world and what its aim is.

The things I am telling you are merely my personal impressions. I would not be talking thus, were it not my duty to put my country on her guard against what might bring about her demoralization. It is not that I doubt her clear-sightedness or her perspicacity. I am quite sure that she will not allow herself to be duped. But, nevertheless, even before the proposals are officially laid before us, I have the right to say to you that they are merely a ruse, an attempt to weaken the bonds of our alliance, to trouble the conscience and to undermine the courage of our people.

Therefore, gentlemen, with apologies for having spoken at such length—but you will not reproach me for having taken up this question—I conclude with the statement that the French Republic will do no less now than did the Convention, under similar circumstances, at an earlier period of our history.

Russian semi-official Statement regarding the German Peace Proposals, December 14, 1916¹

The new appeal of our enemies is not their first attempt to throw the responsibilities of the war, which they have let loose, upon the Entente Powers. In order to obtain the support of the German people, who are tired of the war, the Berlin Government has many times had recourse to fallacious words of peace, and has frequently, in order to animate its troops, offered prospects of early peace. It had already promised peace when Warsaw was taken and Serbia was conquered, forgetting that such promises, if unfulfilled, would create profound distrust.

In its further efforts, which were similar and due to the same interested considerations, the German Government was obliged to carry this question outside Germany, and all the world recalls these attempts,

¹*The Times*, London, December 15, 1916.

notably its *ballons d'essai* which were sent up in neutral countries, particularly the United States. Seeing the inanity of such methods, which deceived no one, Germany attempted to create a peace atmosphere which would allow her to consolidate her aggressive and Imperialist tendencies, while sowing discord between the Allies, by seeking to make public opinion believe that separate *pourparlers* were in progress between her and the Entente Powers.

That was the period of the persistent reports of a separate peace. Seeing, however, that the Allies rejected with strong unanimity all these attempts, our enemies had to think of a more serious plan. They are to-day making, in spite of their confidence in their military and economic power, an appeal to the United States, Spain, and Switzerland, announcing their anxiety to enter into negotiations for peace.

The lack of sincerity and the object of the German proposal are evident. The enemy Governments have need of heroic measures to complete the gaps in their armies. The German Government, in order to lift up the hearts of its people and to prepare it for fresh sacrifices, is striving to create a favourable atmosphere with the following thesis:—"We are struggling for our existence. We are proposing peace. It is refused us. Therefore, the responsibility for the continuation of the war falls upon our enemies."

The object pursued by Germany is, however, clear. She speaks of respect for the rights of other nations, but at the same time she has already introduced in Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, and Poland a regime of terror and violence. As for the future, Germany has proclaimed the illusory independence of Poland, she proposes to divide Serbia between Bulgaria and Austria, economically to subjugate Belgium, and to cede to Bulgaria part of Roumanian territory. Everywhere the idea of the hegemony of Germany predominates, and the latest speeches of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg show up the true aspirations of the German Government.

But to-day, when the Entente Powers have proclaimed their unshakable determination to continue the war to a successful end and to prevent Germany from establishing her hegemony, no favourable ground exists for peace negotiations. Our enemies knew of the speeches of Mr. Lloyd George, M. Briand, Signor Boselli, and the statement of M. Trepoff. They were therefore sure that their proposal was unacceptable. It is so not because the Entente Powers, the friends of peace, are not inclined that way, but because the peace offered by Germany is a snare for public opinion. That is why the enemy Governments carefully avoid mentioning the conditions of peace.

We are sure that this new enterprise of the disturbers of the peace will lead no one astray, and that it is condemned to failure like previous efforts. The Entente Powers would assume a terrible responsibility before their peoples, before all humanity, if they suspended the struggle against Germany's latest attempt to profit by the present situation to implant her hegemony in Europe. All the innumerable sacrifices of the Allies would be nullified by a premature peace with an enemy who is exhausted but not yet brought down.

The firm determination of the Entente Powers to continue the war to final triumph can be weakened by no illusory proposals of the enemy.

Extract from the Speech of Nicolas Pokrovsky, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Duma, December 15, 1916¹

I am addressing you immediately on having been appointed to the post of Minister for Foreign Affairs, and am, naturally, not in a position to give you a detailed statement on the political situation of the day. But I feel constrained to inform you without delay and with the supreme authorization of his Imperial Majesty of the attitude of the Russian Government with regard to the application of our enemies, of which you heard yesterday through the telegrams of the news agencies.

Words of peace coming from the side which bears the whole burden of responsibility for the world conflagration, which it started, and which is unparalleled in the annals of history, however far back one may go, were no surprise to the Allies. In the course of the two and a half years that the war has lasted Germany has more than once mentioned peace. She spoke of it to her armies and to her people each time she entered upon a military operation which was to prove "decisive." After each military success, calculated with a view to creating an impression, she put out feelers for a separate peace on one side and another and conducted an active propaganda in the neutral Press. All these German efforts met with the calm and determined resistance of the Allied Powers.

Now, seeing that she is powerless to make a breach in our unshakable alliance, Germany makes an official proposal to open peace negotiations. In order properly to appreciate the meaning of this proposal one must consider its intrinsic worth and the circumstances

¹*The Times*, London, December 16, 1916.

in which it was made. In substance the German proposal contains no tangible indications regarding the nature of the peace which is desired. It repeats the antiquated legend that the war was forced upon the Central Powers, it speaks of the victorious Austro-German armies, and the irresistibility of their defence, and then, proposing the opening of peace negotiations, the Central Powers express the conviction that the offers which they have to make will guarantee the existence, honour, and free development of their own peoples, and are calculated to establish a lasting peace. That is all the communication contains, except a threat to continue the war to a victorious end, and, in the case of refusal, to throw the responsibility for the further spilling of blood on our Allies.

What are the circumstances in which the German proposal was made? The enemy armies devastated and occupy Belgium, Serbia and Montenegro, and a part of France, Russia and Roumania. The Austro-Germans have just proclaimed the illusory independence of a part of Poland, and are by this trying to lay hands on the entire Polish nation. Who, then, with the exception of Germany, could derive any advantage under such conditions by the opening of peace negotiations?

But the motives of the German step will be shown more clearly in relief if one takes into consideration the domestic conditions of our enemies. Without speaking of the unlawful attempts of the Germans to force the population of Russian Poland to take arms against its own country, it will suffice to mention the introduction of general forced labour in Germany to understand how hard is the situation of our enemies. To attempt at the last moment to profit by their fleeting territorial conquests before their domestic weakness was revealed—that was the real meaning of the German proposal. In the event of failure they will exploit at home the refusal of the Allies to accept peace in order to rehabilitate the tottering morale of their populations.

But there is another senseless motive for the step they have taken. Failing to understand the true spirit which animates Russia, our enemies deceive themselves with the vain hope that they will find among us men cowardly enough to allow themselves to be deceived if even for a moment by lying proposals. That will not be. No Russian heart will yield. On the contrary, the whole of Russia will rally all the more closely round its august Sovereign, who declared at the very beginning of the war that he “would not make peace until the last enemy soldier had left our country.”

Russia will apply herself with more energy than ever to the realization of the aims proclaimed before you on the day when you reassembled, especially to the positive and general collaboration which constitutes the only sure means of arriving at the end which we all have at heart—namely, the crushing of the enemy. The Russian Government repudiates with indignation the mere idea of suspending the struggle and thereby permitting Germany to take advantage of the last chance she will have of subjecting Europe to her hegemony. All the innumerable sacrifices already made would be in vain if a premature peace were concluded with an enemy whose forces have been shaken, but not broken, an enemy who is seeking a breathing space by making deceitful offers of a permanent peace. In this inflexible decision, Russia is in complete agreement with all her valiant Allies. We are all equally convinced of the vital necessity of carrying on the war to a victorious end, and no subterfuge by our enemies will prevent us from following this path.

Resolution of the Russian Duma against acceptance of the German Peace Proposals, December 15, 1916¹

The Duma having heard the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs is unanimously in favour of a categorical refusal by the Allied Governments to enter under present conditions into any peace negotiations whatever. It considers that the German proposals are nothing more than a fresh proof of the weakness of the enemy, and are a hypocritical act from which the enemy expects no real success, but by which he seeks to throw upon others the responsibility for the war and for what has happened during it, and to exculpate itself before public opinion in Germany.

The Duma considers that a premature peace would not only be a brief period of calm, but would involve the danger of another bloody war and renewed deplorable sacrifices on the part of the people.

It considers that a lasting peace will be possible only after a decisive victory over the military power of the enemy, and after the definite renunciation by Germany of the aspirations which render her responsible for the world war and for the horrors by which it is accompanied.

¹*The Times*, London, December 16, 1916.

Speech of Arthur Henderson, unofficial Member of the British Cabinet, London, December 16, 1916¹

The British people, with their national love of peace, were anxious that the real meaning of the German proposals should be appreciated. But the Government knew nothing concerning the text of the proposals, and Germany's motives must for the present remain a matter of speculation. But, judging from past and from recent events, we might anticipate, without over-assumption, that any proposals Germany might put forward would not err on the side of magnanimity.

Any proposals put forward must be examined with the greatest possible care. We of all people must not forget that Germany was prepared for peace with this country as late as August, 1914. But on what conditions? That we were prepared to betray France and acquiesce in the violation of the neutrality of Belgium, which Germany, like ourselves, had on oath sworn to maintain. The lesson to be learned from her present desire for peace was that any proposal received must be scrutinized in the light of our obligations to our Allies, to whom we were pledged to make no separate peace. However convenient it might be for Germany to ignore her responsibility in this great war, however far she might ignore her responsibilities to small nationalities, it was loyalty on our part to our brave and loyal comrades that must bind us to the end.

Subject to these considerations, the people of this country were prepared to-day, as in August, 1914, to accept peace, provided that that peace was both just and permanent. But there was one supreme condition—namely, that the principles governing any decision must be those on which we entered, and on which we were continuing, the war. We entered the war in defence of small nationalities, to defend France from wanton aggression, and to preserve our own security. Indemnity for the past was not enough unless we had guarantees for the future; and guarantees for the future were not enough without ample reparation for all that Belgium, France, Serbia and Poland had suffered. The peace into which we entered must contain guarantees for its own duration. Germany might have such a peace if she furnished us with proof of her good intentions.

But, he concluded, if her present overtures are merely a pretence; if it is shown that she is merely arranging an armistice, to enable her to obtain a breathing-space that will furnish her with the opportunity to lay fresh plans of aggression, then I say, whatever may be the temp-

¹*The Times*, London, December 16, 1916.

tation to the people of these islands, we must set our faces like the steel you work upon against her proposals.

Extract from the Speech of Baron Sonnino, Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in the Chamber of Deputies, December 18, 1916¹

The Government knows absolutely nothing regarding the specific conditions of the enemy's peace proposals and regards as an enemy manœuvre the rumours secretly spread about them. We must remember that none of the Allies could in any way take into consideration any condition offered to it separately. The reply of the Allies will be published as soon as it has been agreed upon.

We all desire a lasting peace, but we consider as such an ordered settlement of which the duration does not depend upon the strength of the chains binding one people to another, but on a just equilibrium between States and respect for the principle of nationality, the rights of nations, and reasons of humanity and civilization. While intensifying our efforts to beat the enemy, we do not aim at an international settlement by servitude and predominance implying the annihilation of peoples and nations. If a serious proposal was made on a solid basis for negotiations satisfying the general demands of justice and civilization, no one would oppose an *a priori* refusal to treat, but many things indicate that that is not the case now. The tone of boasting and insincerity characterizing the preamble to the enemy notes inspires no confidence in the proposals of the Central Empires. The Governments of the Allies must avoid the creation for their populations by a false mirage of vain negotiations of an enormous deception, followed by cruel disappointment.

¹The Times, London, December 19, 1916.

President Wilson's Peace Note, December 18, 1916¹*The Secretary of State to Ambassador W. H. Page*²

[TELEGRAM]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, December 18, 1916.

The President directs me to send you the following communication to be presented immediately to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government to which you are accredited:

"The President of the United States has instructed me to suggest to His Majesty's Government a course of action with regard to the present war which he hopes that the British Government will take under consideration as suggested in the most friendly spirit and as coming not only from a friend but also as coming from the representative of a neutral nation whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war and whose concern for its early conclusion arises out of a manifest necessity to determine how best to safeguard those interests if the war is to continue.

"The suggestion which I am instructed to make the President has long had it in mind to offer. He is somewhat embarrassed to offer it at this particular time because it may now seem to have been prompted by the recent overtures of the Central Powers. It is in fact in no way associated with them in its origin and the President would have delayed offering it until those overtures had been answered but for the fact that it also concerns the question of peace and may best be considered in connection with other proposals which have the same end in view. The President can only beg that his suggestion be considered entirely on its own merits and as if it had been made in other circumstances.³

¹Official prints of the Department of State.

²Same *mutatis mutandis* to the American Diplomatic Representatives accredited to all the belligerent Governments and to all neutral Governments for their information.

³In the note addressed to the Representatives of the Central Powers, this paragraph reads as follows:

"The suggestion which I am instructed to make the President has long had it in mind to offer. He is somewhat embarrassed to offer it at this particular time because it may now seem to have been prompted by a desire to play a part in connection with the recent overtures of the Central Powers. It has in fact been in no way suggested by them in its origin and the President would have delayed offering it until those overtures had been independently answered but for the fact that it also concerns the question of peace and may best be considered in connection with other proposals which have the same end in view. The President can only beg that his suggestion be considered entirely on its own merits and as if it had been made in other circumstances."

"The President suggests that an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory as a guaranty against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them. He is indifferent as to the means taken to accomplish this. He would be happy himself to serve or even to take the initiative in its accomplishment in any way that might prove acceptable, but he has no desire to determine the method or the instrumentality. One way will be as acceptable to him as another if only the great object he has in mind be attained.

"He takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States as secure against aggression or denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful States now at war. Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this and against aggression of selfish interference of any kind. Each would be jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power amidst multiplying suspicions; but each is ready to consider the formation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. Before that final step can be taken, however, each deems it necessary first to settle the issues of the present war upon terms which will certainly safeguard the independence, the territorial integrity, and the political and commercial freedom of the nations involved.

"In the measures to be taken to secure the future peace of the world the people and Government of the United States are as vitally and as directly interested as the Governments now at war. Their interest, moreover, in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or Government. They stand ready, and even eager, to coöperate in the accomplishment of these ends, when the war is over, with every influence and resource at their command. But the war must first be concluded. The terms upon which it is to be concluded they are not at liberty to suggest; but the President does feel that it is his right and his duty to point out their intimate interest in its conclusion, lest it should presently be too late to accomplish the greater things which lie beyond its con-

clusion, lest the situation of neutral nations, now exceedingly hard to endure, be rendered altogether intolerable, and lest, more than all, an injury be done civilization itself which can never be atoned for or repaired.

"The President therefore feels altogether justified in suggesting an immediate opportunity for a comparison of views as to the terms which must precede those ultimate arrangements for the peace of the world, which all desire and in which the neutral nations as well as those at war are ready to play their full responsible part. If the contest must continue to proceed towards undefined ends by slow attrition until the one group of belligerents or the other is exhausted, if million after million of human lives must continue to be offered up until on the one side or the other there are no more to offer, if resentments must be kindled that can never cool and despairs engendered from which there can be no recovery, hopes of peace and of the willing concert of free peoples will be rendered vain and idle.

"The life of the entire world has been profoundly affected. Every part of the great family of mankind has felt the burden and terror of this unprecedented contest of arms. No nation in the civilized world can be said in truth to stand outside its influence or to be safe against its disturbing effects. And yet the concrete objects for which it is being waged have never been definitively stated.

"The leaders of the several belligerents have, as has been said, stated those objects in general terms. But, stated in general terms, they seem the same on both sides. Never yet have the authoritative spokesmen of either side avowed the precise objects which would, if attained, satisfy them and their people that the war had been fought out. The world has been left to conjecture what definitive results, what actual exchange of guarantees, what political or territorial changes or readjustments, what stage of military success even, would bring the war to an end.

"It may be that peace is nearer than we know; that the terms which the belligerents on the one side and on the other would deem it necessary to insist upon are not so irreconcilable as some have feared; that an interchange of views would clear the way at least for conference and make the permanent concord of the nations a hope of the immediate future, a concert of nations immediately practicable.

"The President is not proposing peace; he is not even offering mediation. He is merely proposing that soundings be taken in order that we may learn, the neutral nations with the belligerent, how near

the haven of peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing. He believes that the spirit in which he speaks and the objects which he seeks will be understood by all concerned, and he confidently hopes for a response which will bring a new light into the affairs of the world."

LANSING.

**Extracts from the Speech of Lord Curzon in the House of Lords,
December 19, 1916¹**

I hope I shall not be wrong if I state my belief that the friendly welcome which has been accorded to the present Government, not least by your Lordships, has been due to the conviction that a greater and more concentrated effort, more effective and universal organisation, a more and adequate and rapid use of the resources not only of ourselves alone, but of our Allies, are required if we are to carry the war to the successful termination we all desire. This country is not merely willing to be led, but is almost calling to be driven. They desire the vigorous prosecution of the war, a sufficient and ample return for all the sacrifices they have made, reparation by the enemy for his countless and inconceivable crimes, security that those crimes shall not be repeated, and that those sacrifices shall not have been made in vain. They desire that the peace of Europe shall be re-established on the basis of a free and independent existence of nations great and small. They desire as regards ourselves that our own country shall be free from the menace which the triumph of German arms, and still more the triumph of the German spirit, would entail. It is to carry out these intentions that the present Government has come into existence, and by its success or failure in doing so will it be judged.

At the very moment when she is talking of peace Germany is making the most stupendous efforts for the prosecution of the war, and to find new men. She is squeezing possibly the last drop out of the manhood of her nation. She is compelling every man, woman, and boy, between sixteen and sixty, to enter the service of the State. At the same time, with a callous ferocity and disregard of international law, she is driving the population of the territory she has occupied into compulsory service. She is even trying to get an army out of Poland by offering it the illusory boon of "independence." That is the nature of the challenge we have to meet. It has been our object to establish such a system of re-

¹*The Morning Post*, London, December 20, 1916.

cruiting as will ensure that no man is taken for the Army who is capable of rendering more useful service in industry. We ought to have power to see that every man who is not taken into the Army is employed on national work. At present it is only on men fit for military service the nation has the right to call. Unfit men, exempted men, are surely under the same moral obligation. We need to make a swift and effective answer to Germany's latest move, and in my opinion it is not too much to ask the people of this country to take upon themselves in a few months and as free men the obligations which Germany is imposing on herself. As our Army grows our need of munitions grows. A large part of our labour for munition purposes is at present immobile, and we have no power to transfer men from where they are wasting their strength to places where they can be of great service. We have not the organisation for transferring them as volunteers. These are the powers we must take, and this is the organisation we must complete. The matter is not new. It was considered by the War Committee of the late Government and others, and it was decided that the time had come for the adoption of universal national service. It was one of the first matters taken up by the present Government.

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Having dealt so far with the domestic programme of the Government I will now refer to the military and political situations. While I do not believe in painting too rosy a picture of affairs, I think we ought not to take a gloomy view. It is true that Germany has captured the capital of Roumania, but your Lordships must not imagine that she has gained all the success even in Roumania that the words of the Imperial Chancellor would appear to suggest. It may be a consolation to your Lordships to know that the oil refineries and stocks in that part of Roumania which is now in the occupation of the Germans were destroyed before the arrival of the Germans. It would be invidious if I were to discuss the cause of Roumania's failure. It is one of the tragic incidents of the war. The only military Power which could come to the assistance of Roumania was Russia. Russia has done all in her power. The utmost we could do was to send supplies, as we did, and to engage the common enemy by an active offensive from our military base at Salonica. What changes have taken place in the external aspect of the war during the present year?

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I distrust statistics, at any rate, in casualties in war, nor do I attach too much importance to the fact that since July 1 the combined armies

of France and England have taken 105,000 German prisoners, 150 heavy guns, 200 field guns, and 15,000 machine guns. There have been much more important consequences than this. The Allies have established an incontestable superiority not merely in the fighting strength and stamina of their men, but in artillery and the air. It is clear that the morale of the Germans is greatly shaken and that their forces are sick of it. Evidence is accumulating of the bad interior condition of Germany, in some cases the admitted hunger and in some cases almost starvation, and the progressive physical deterioration of her people. The outlook is not quite so good for the Central Powers as they would have us believe, and our attitude need not be one of despondency or alarm. It is at this moment that Germany has come forward with offers of peace, or rather I can not fairly use the word offer, but rather let me say vague adumbrations and indications of peace. What has been the course of events? First there has been the speech of the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag. Next there is the note to the Powers. The note proclaims the indestructible strength of the Central Powers and proclaims that Germany is not only undefeated, but undefeatable. It advances the plea that Germany was constrained to take up arms for the defence of her existence. It avows German respect for the rights of other nations—and expresses a desire to stem the flood of blood, and finally, after this remarkable preamble, it declares that they propose to enter even now, in the hour of their triumph, they propose, as an act of condescension, to enter into peace negotiations. As regards peace, is there a single one of the Allied Powers who would not welcome peace if it is to be a genuine peace, a lasting peace, a peace that could be secured on honorable terms, a peace that would give guarantees for the future? Is there a single Government, statesman, or individual who does not wish to put an end to this conflict, which is turning half the world into a hell and wrecking the brightest prospects of mankind? In what spirit is it proposed and from whom does it come?

Is this the spirit in which your Lordships think that peace proposals should be made? Does it hold out a reasonable prospect of inducing the Allies to lay down their arms? Is there any indication of German desire to make reparation and to give guarantees for the future? So far as we can judge from that speech, and it is all we have to judge by, the spirit which breathes in every word is the spirit of German militarism. While that speech is being made Belgian deportation is going on. It is said that the "peace of God passeth understanding." Surely the

same thing can be said in a different sense of the peace which Germany proposes. We know nothing of that. We have only the menacing tone of the note and the speech which accompanied it. Let me put one more reflection before you. Let no one think for a moment that it is merely by territorial restitution or by reversion to the *status quo ante* that the objects for which the Allies are fighting will be obtained. We are fighting, it is true, to recover for Belgium, France, Russia, Serbia, and Roumania the territories which they have lost, and to secure reparation for the cruel wrongs they have experienced. But you may restore to them all, and more than all, they have lost, you may pile on indemnities which no treasury in Europe could produce, and yet the war would have been in vain if we had no guarantees and no securities against a repetition of Germany's offense. We are not fighting to destroy Germany. Such an idea has never entered into the mind of any thinking human being in this country. But we are fighting to secure that the German spirit shall not crush the free progress of nations and that the armed strength of Germany, augmented and fortified, shall not dominate the future. We are fighting that our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren shall not have, in days when we have passed away, to go again through the experience of the years 1914 to 1917. This generation has suffered in order that the next may live. We are ready enough for peace when these guarantees have been secured and these objects attained. Till then we owe it to the hundreds of thousands of our fellow-countrymen and our Allies, who have shed their blood for us, to be true to the trust of their splendid and uncomplaining sacrifice and to endure to the end.

Extracts from the Speech of Premier Lloyd George in the House of Commons, December 19, 1916¹

I am afraid I shall have to claim the indulgence of the House in making the observations which I have to make in moving the second reading of this Bill. I am still suffering a little from my throat. I appear before the House of Commons to-day with the most terrible responsibility that can fall upon the shoulders of any living man as the chief adviser of the Crown in the most gigantic war in which this country has ever been engaged, a war upon the events of which its destiny depends. It is the greatest war ever waged. The burdens are the heaviest that have been cast upon this or any other country,

¹*The Times*, London, December 20, 1916.

and the issues which hang on it are the gravest that have been attached to any conflict in which humanity has ever been involved.

The responsibilities of the new Government have been suddenly accentuated by a declaration made by the German Chancellor, and I propose to deal with that at once. The statement made by him in the German Reichstag has been followed by a note presented to us by the United States of America without any note or comment. The answer that will be given by the Government will be given in full accord with all our brave Allies. Naturally there has been an interchange of views, not upon the note, because it has only recently arrived, but upon the speech which propelled it, and, inasmuch as the note itself is practically only a reproduction or certainly a paraphrase of the speech, the subject-matter of the note itself has been discussed informally between the Allies, and I am very glad to be able to state that we have each of us, separately and independently, arrived at identical conclusions. I am very glad that the first answer that was given to the statement of the German Chancellor was given by France and by Russia. They have the unquestioned right to give the first answer to such an invitation. The enemy is still on their soil. Their sacrifices have been greater. The answer they have given has already appeared in all the papers, and I simply stand here to-day on behalf of the Government to give a clear and definite support to the statement which they have already made. Let us examine what the statement is and examine it calmly. Any man or set of men who wantonly or without sufficient cause prolong a terrible conflict like this would have on his soul a crime that oceans could not cleanse. Upon the other hand it is equally true that any man or set of men who from a sense of weariness or despair abandoned the struggle without achieving the high purpose for which he had entered into it would have been guilty of the costliest act of poltroonery ever perpetrated by any statesman. I should like to quote the very well-known words of Abraham Lincoln under similar conditions:—"We accepted this war for an object, a worthy object, and the war will end when that object is attained. Under God I hope it will never end until that time." Are we likely to achieve that object by accepting the invitation of the German Chancellor? That is the only question we have to put to ourselves.

There has been some talk about proposals of peace. What are the proposals? There are none. To enter, on the invitation of Germany, proclaiming herself victorious, without any knowledge of the proposals she proposes to make, into a conference is to put our heads

into a noose with the rope end in the hands of Germany. This country is not altogether without experience in these matters. This is not the first time we have fought a great military despotism that was overshadowing Europe, and it will not be the first time we shall have helped to overthrow military despotism. We have an uncomfortable historical memory of these things, and we can recall when one of the greatest of these despots had a purpose to serve in the working of his nefarious schemes. His favorite device was to appear in the garb of the Angel of Peace, and he usually appeared under two conditions. When he wished for time to assimilate his conquests or to reorganize his forces for fresh conquests, or, secondly, when his subjects showed symptoms of fatigue and war weariness the appeal was always made in the name of humanity. He demanded an end to bloodshed, at which he professed himself to be horrified, but for which he himself was mainly responsible. Our ancestors were taken in once, and bitterly they and Europe rue it. The time was devoted to reorganizing his forces for a deadlier attack than ever upon the liberties of Europe, and examples of that kind cause us to regard this note with a considerable measure of reminiscent disquietude.

We feel that we ought to know, before we can give favourable consideration to such an invitation, that Germany is prepared to accede to the only terms on which it is possible for peace to be obtained and maintained in Europe. What are those terms? They have been repeatedly stated by all the leading statesmen of the Allies. My right hon. friend has stated them repeatedly here and outside, and all I can do is to quote, as my right hon. friend the leader of the House did last week, practically the statement of the terms put forward by my right hon. friend—

“Restitution, reparation, guarantee against repetition”—so that there shall be no mistake, and it is important that there should be no mistake in a matter of life and death to millions.

Let me repeat again—complete restitution, full reparation, effectual guarantee. Did the German Chancellor use a single phrase to indicate that he was prepared to accept such a peace? Was there a hint of restitution, was there any suggestion of reparation, was there any invitation of any security for the future that this outrage on civilization would not be again perpetrated at the first profitable opportunity? The very substance and style of this speech constitutes a denial of peace on the only terms on which peace is possible. He is not even conscious now that Germany has committed any offence against the rights of free nations. Listen to this from

the note:—"Not for an instant have they (they being the Central Powers) swerved from the conviction that respect of the rights of other nations is not in any degree incompatible with their own rights and legitimate interests." When did they discover that? Where was the respect for the rights of other nations in Belgium and Serbia? That was self-defence! Menaced, I suppose, by the overwhelming armies of Belgium, the Germans had been intimidated into invading Belgium, and the burning of Belgian cities and villages, to the massacring of thousands of inhabitants, old and young, to the carrying of the survivors into bondage. Yea, and they were carrying them into slavery at the very moment when this note was being written about the unswerving conviction as to the respect for the root of the rights of other nations. Are these outrages the legitimate interest of Germany? We must know. That is not the moment for peace. If excuses of this kind for palpable crimes can be put forward two and a half years after the exposure by grim facts of the guarantee, is there, I ask in all solemnity, any guarantee that similar subterfuges will not be used in the future to overthrow any treaty of peace you may enter into with Prussian militarism.

This note and that speech prove that not yet have they learned the very alphabet of respect for the rights of others. Without reparation, peace is impossible. Are all these outrages against humanity on land and on sea to be liquidated by a few pious phrases about humanity? Is there to be no reckoning for them? Are we to grasp the hand that perpetrated these atrocities in friendship without any reparation being tendered or given? I am told that we are to begin, Germany helping us, to exact reparation for all future violence committed after the war. We have begun already. It has already cost us so much, and we must exact it now so as not to leave such a grim inheritance to our children. As much as we all long for peace, deeply as we are horrified with war, this note and the speech which heralded it do not afford us much encouragement and hope for an honourable and lasting peace. What hope is given in that speech that the whole root and cause of this great bitterness, the arrogant spirit of the Prussian military caste, will not be as dominant as ever if we patch up peace now? Why, the very speech in which these peace suggestions are made resound to the boast of Prussian military triumph. It is a long pæan over the victories of von Hindenburg and his legions. The very appeal for peace was delivered ostentatiously from the triumphal chariot of Prussian militarism.

We must keep a steadfast eye upon the purpose for which we entered the war, otherwise the great sacrifices we have been making will be in vain. The German note states that it was for the defence of their existence and the freedom of national development that the Central Powers were constrained to take up arms. Such phrases even deceive those who pen them. They are intended to delude the German nation into supporting the designs of the Prussian military caste. Who ever wished to put an end to their national existence or the freedom of their national development? We welcomed their development as long as it was on the paths of peace—the greater their development upon that road, the greater would all humanity be enriched by their efforts. That was not our desire, and it is not our purpose now.

The Allies entered this war to defend Europe against the aggression of Prussian military domination, and, having begun it, they must insist that the only end is the most complete and effective guarantee against the possibility of that caste ever again disturbing the peace of Europe. Prussia, since she got into the hands of that caste, has been a bad neighbour, arrogant, threatening, bullying, shifting boundaries at her will, taking one fair field after another from weaker neighbours, and adding them to her own domain. With her belt ostentatiously full of weapons of offence, and ready at a moment's notice to use them, she has always been an unpleasant, disturbing neighbour in Europe. She got thoroughly on the nerves of Europe. There was no peace near where she dwelt. It is difficult for those who are fortunate enough to live thousands of miles away to understand what it has meant to those who live near. Even here, with the protection of the broad seas between us, we know what a disturbing factor the Prussians were with their constant naval menace.

But even we can hardly realize what it has meant to France and to Russia. Several times there were threats directed to them even within the lifetime of this generation which presented the alternative of war or humiliation. There were many of us who hoped that internal influences in Germany would have been strong enough to check and ultimately to eliminate these feelings. All our hopes proved illusory, and now that this great war has been forced by the Prussian military leaders upon France, Russia, Italy, and ourselves, it would be folly, it would be a cruel folly, not to see to it that this swashbuckling through the streets of Europe to the disturbance of all harmless and peaceful citizens shall be dealt with now as an offence against the law of nations. The mere word that

led Belgium to her own destruction will not satisfy Europe any more. We all believed it. We all trusted it. It gave way at the first pressure of temptation, and Europe has been plunged into the vortex of blood.

We will therefore wait until we hear what terms and guarantees the German Government offer other than those, better than those, surer than those, which she so lightly broke. Meantime, we shall put our trust in an unbroken Army rather than in a broken faith.

For the moment I do not think it would be advisable for me to add anything upon this particular invitation. A formal reply will be delivered by the Allies in the course of the next few days. I shall therefore proceed with the other part of the task which I have in front of me. What is the urgent task in front of the Government? To complete, and make even more effective, the mobilization of all our national resources—a mobilization which has been going on since the commencement of the war—so as to enable the nation to bear the strain, however prolonged, and to march through to victory, however lengthy, and however exhausted may be the task. It is a gigantic task.

Let me give this word of warning, if there be any who have given their confidence to the new Administration in expectation of a speedy victory, they will be doomed to disappointment. I am not going to paint a gloomy picture of the military situation. If I did it would not be a true picture. But I must paint a stern picture, because that accurately represents the facts.

There is a time in every prolonged and fierce war when in the passion and rage of conflict men forget the high purpose with which they entered it. This is a struggle for international right, international honour, international good faith—the channel along which peace, honour, and good will must flow amongst men. The embankment laboriously built up by generations of men against barbarism has been broken, and had not the might of Britain passed into the breach, Europe would have been inundated with a flood of savagery and unbridled lust of power. The plain sense of fair-play amongst nations, the growth of an international conscience, the protection of the weak against the strong by the stronger, the consciousness that justice has a more powerful backing in this world than greed, the knowledge that any outrage upon fair dealing between nations, great or small, will meet with prompt and meritable chastisement—these constitute the causeway along which humanity

was progressing slowly to higher things. The triumph of pressure would sweep it all away and leave mankind to struggle helpless in the morass. That is why since this war began I have known but one political aim; and for it I have fought with a single eye—that is the rescue of mankind from the most overwhelming catastrophe that has ever yet menaced its well-being.

Extracts from the Speech of Former Premier Asquith in the House of Commons, December 19, 1916¹

I think what I have said is sufficient to show that the use we have made of the methods open to us—naval, military, and economic—has not been ineffectual, and if further proof were required it is to be found in the so-called peace proposals which have been somewhat clumsily projected into space from Berlin. It is true that these proposals are wrapped up in the familiar dialect of Prussian arrogance, but how comes it that a nation which, after two years of war, professes itself conscious of military superiority and confident of ultimate victory should begin to whisper, nay, not to whisper, but to shout so that all the world can hear it, the word “peace”? Is it a sudden access of chivalry? Why and when has the German Chancellor become so acutely sensitive to what he calls the dictates of humanity? No; without being uncharitable we may well look elsewhere for the origin of this pronouncement. It is born of military and economic necessity. When I moved the last Vote of Credit I said there was no one among us who did not yearn for peace, but that it must be an honourable and not a shamefaced peace; it must be a peace that promised to be durable and not a patched-up and precarious compromise; it must be a peace which achieved the purpose for which we entered on the war. Such a peace we would gladly accept. Anything short of it we were bound to repudiate by every obligation of honour, and above all by the debt we owe to those, and especially to the young, who have given their lives for what they and we believed to be a worthy cause. Since I spoke two months ago their ranks have been sadly and steadily reinforced. I should like to refer in passing for a moment to one of them, a friend and colleague of mine, Lord Lucas. Apart from the advantages of birth and fortune he was a man of singularly winning personality, fine intelligence, and with the strongest sense of public duty. He worked inconspicuously but hard in the early days of the Territorial Army. He served for some years at the War Office and afterwards became a member of the Cabinet. At the time of the

¹*The Morning Post*, London, December 20, 1916.

Coalition he stood aside without a murmur and volunteered straight away for the Royal Flying Corps. Now he has met his death in a gallant reconnoitering raid over the German lines. He was not, I think, more than forty. He had a full and fruitful life. Nor can we or ought we forget the countless victims, both among our own people and among the Allies, of the ruthless and organised violation of the humane restrictions by which both on land and sea the necessary horrors of war have been hitherto mitigated. For my own part I say plainly and emphatically that I see nothing in the note of the German Government which gives me the least reason to believe that they are in a mood to give to the Allies what the last time I spoke I declared to be essential—reparation and security.

If they are in the right mood—if they are prepared to give us reparation for the past and security for the future, let them say so. While I was at the head of the Government, on several occasions I indicated, I believe, in quite unambiguous language, the minimum of the Allies' demands, before they put up their swords, as well as the general character of the ultimate international status upon which our hopes and desires are set. I have no longer authority to speak for the Government or the nation, but I do not suppose the House or the country are going back from what I said in their name and on their behalf. It is not we that stand in the way of peace when we decline, as I hope we shall, to enter blindfold into the parleys which start from nothing, and therefore can lead to nothing. Peace we all desire, but peace can only come—peace, I mean, that is worthy the name and that satisfies the definition of the word—peace will only come on the terms that atonement is made for past wrongs, that the weak and the downtrodden are restored, and that the faith of treaties and the sovereignty of public law are securely enthroned over the nations of the world.

Speech of Bonar Law, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the House of Commons, December 21, 1916¹

The House will readily understand that I am divided between two desires. It is the general desire of the House, I think, that we should rise to-morrow, and if that is to be done it is quite impossible that a subject so vast as that which we have just been discussing can be properly debated to-night. I am going to try to set an example by saying very little indeed on the burning questions which have been

¹*The Times*, London, December 22, 1916.

raised in the course of the debate. In regard to the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down, I at least who have only run vicarious risks have no right to throw taunts at a man who has had his place in the fighting line. At the same time, I am compelled to say that if the spirit of the speech to which we have just listened were to permeate this country, then, in my belief, all the blood and treasure which have been spent in this war will have been spent in vain. I do not think that he or anyone needs to impress upon us what are the horrors of this war.

If there were ever any who love war for itself—I have always hated it—if there were any whose imaginations were moved by the pomp and panoply of war, we know better now what it is. It is not glorious victories, or the hope of them, that is moving the hearts of the people of this country. What we think of is the men—our own nearest relations—who are suffering the hardships which have been pointed out to us. What we are thinking of are the desolate homes to which life will never return again in this world. What we are thinking of are the maimed and wounded whom we see going about our streets. We do not love war, and if I saw any prospect of securing the objects for which we have been fighting by a peace to-morrow, there is no man in this House who would welcome it more gladly than I would.

But what is the position? The hon. gentleman says—I hope no one will think that in quoting his words I have any party view in mind—“Let us trust to the old Liberal traditions; let us trust to the good hearts of those we are dealing with.” Why are we in this war to-day? Why are we suffering the terrible agonies which this nation is enduring? It is because we did trust Germany; because we did believe that the crimes which have been committed by them would never be committed by any human being. It is all very well to say, “Let us get terms of peace.” Can you get any terms of peace more binding than the treaty to protect the neutrality of Belgium? Can you come to any conclusion upon paper or by promise which will give us greater security than we had before this war broke out? Where are we to find them? I hope that not this country alone, but all the neutral nations of the world, will understand the position that has now arisen. Germany has made a proposal of peace. On what basis? On the basis of her victorious army.

The hon. member who spoke last tells us that if we win the victory there will be conscription for ever in this country. But what will be the position if peace is settled on the basis of a victorious German army? Is there any man in this House who has honestly considered not merely the conditions in which this war was forced on

the world, but the way in which the war has been carried on—is there any man in this House who honestly believes that the dangers and miseries from which we have suffered can be cured in any other way than by making the Germans realize that frightfulness does not pay, and that their militarism is not going to rule the world?

I ask the House to realize what it is we are fighting for. We are not fighting for territory; we are not fighting for the greater strength of the nations who are fighting. We are fighting for two things, to put it in a nutshell: We are fighting for peace now, but we are also fighting for security for peace in the time to come. When this German peace proposal comes before us, not only based on German victories, but when they claim that they are acting on humanitarian grounds, when they treat it, to put it at the best, from their point of view, as if they and the Allies were at least equal—let the House consider what has happened in this war. Let them consider the outrages in Belgium, the outrages on sea and land, the massacres in Armenia, which Germany could have stopped at a word, if she had wished to do so.

Let them realize that this war will have been fought in vain, utterly in vain, unless we can make sure that it shall never again be in the power of a single man or of a group of men to plunge the world into miseries such as I have described.

When the hon. gentleman talks about peace on these terms, I ask anyone in this House or in the country this question: Is there to be no reparation for the wrong? Is the peace to come on this basis, that the greatest crime in the world's history is to go absolutely unpunished? It is not vindictiveness to say that. It is my firm belief that unless all the nations of the world can be made to realize that these moral forces of which the hon. gentleman spoke have to be shown in action—unless we realize that, there never can be an enduring peace in this world. I am not afraid of my countrymen. We have been told that the troops at the front will fight to the end, to secure what they think is necessary as a result of this war. I am sure that they will. I am sure also that our fellow countrymen at home who up till now have made few sacrifices, except the sacrifice of those dear to them, are determined in this matter, and that if they can be made to believe, as I am sure they can, that the objects for which we are fighting can be secured, then there is no sacrifice which they will not be prepared to make. I am afraid I have said more than I intended when I rose, but I could not refrain from expressing what I felt on this subject.

Swiss Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 23, 1916¹

The President of the United States of America, with whom the Swiss Federal Council, guided by its warm desire that the hostilities may soon come to an end, has for a considerable time been in touch, had the kindness to apprise the Federal Council of the peace note sent to the Governments of the Central and Entente Powers. In that note President Wilson discusses the great desirability of international agreements for the purpose of avoiding more effectively and permanently the occurrence of catastrophes such as the one under which the peoples are suffering to-day. In this connection he lays particular stress on the necessity for bringing about the end of the present war. Without making peace proposals himself or offering mediation, he confines himself to sounding as to whether mankind may hope to have approached the haven of peace.

The most meritorious personal initiative of President Wilson will find a mighty echo in Switzerland. True to the obligations arising from observing the strictest neutrality, united by the same friendship with the States of both warring groups of powers, situated like an island amidst the seething waves of the terrible world war, with its ideal and material interests most sensibly jeopardized and violated, our country is filled with a deep longing for peace, and ready to assist by its small means to stop the endless sufferings caused by the war and brought before its eyes by daily contact with the interned, the severely wounded, and those expelled, and to establish the foundations for a beneficial cooperation of the peoples.

The Swiss Federal Council is therefore glad to seize the opportunity to support the efforts of the President of the United States. It would consider itself happy if it could act in any, no matter how modest a way, for the *rapprochement* of the peoples now engaged in the struggle, and for reaching a lasting peace.

¹*The New York Times*, December 25, 1916.

Swiss Peace Note in support of President Wilson, December 23,
1916¹

The President of the United States of America has just addressed to the Governments of the Entente and to the Central Powers a note in favour of peace. He has been good enough to communicate it to the Swiss Federal Council, which, inspired by the ardent desire to see an early cessation of hostilities, got into touch with him as long as five weeks ago.

In this note President Wilson recalls how desirable it is to come to international agreements with a view to avoiding, in a permanent and sure manner, such catastrophes as those which the peoples have to suffer to-day. Before all, he insists upon the necessity of putting an end to the present war. He himself does not formulate peace proposals, nor does he propose his mediation. He limits himself to sounding the belligerents in order to ascertain whether humanity may hope to-day that it has advanced towards a beneficent peace.

The generous personal initiative of President Wilson will not fail to awaken a profound echo in Switzerland. Faithful to the duties which the strictest observation of neutrality imposes upon her, united by the same friendship to the two groups of Powers at present at war, isolated in the midst of the frightful *mêlée* of the peoples, seriously threatened and affected in her spiritual and material interests, our country longs for peace.

Switzerland is ready to aid with all her feeble strength in putting an end to the sufferings of war which she sees being endured every day by the interned, the seriously wounded, and the deported. She, too, is willing to lay the foundations for a fruitful collaboration of the peoples. That is why the Swiss Federal Council seizes with joy the opportunity to support the efforts of the President of the United States of America. She would esteem herself happy if she

¹*The Times*, London, December 26, 1916. Addressed to all the belligerent Governments. Norway, Sweden and Denmark likewise addressed these Governments in support of President Wilson, in an identical note of December 22, 1916, no official text of which is available. These notes were briefly acknowledged by the Entente Allies on January 17, 1917, the four States being referred for fuller reply to the joint note to President Wilson of January 10, 1917. *Ibid.*, January 18, 1917. For the replies of the Central Governments to the Swiss note, see *post*, pp. 36, 37. Germany, on January 1, 1917, briefly acknowledged the Scandinavian note, concluding with the remark: "It depends upon the reply of the Entente whether the attempt to give back to the world the blessings of peace will be crowned with success." *The New York Times*, January 4, 1917. For the Austro-Hungarian reply to the Scandinavian note, see *post*, p. 45.

could, even in the most modest measure, work for the *rapprochement* of the nations at war and the establishment of a lasting peace.

German Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 26,
1916¹

Ambassador Gerard to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM—PARAPHRASE]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Berlin, December 26, 1916.

Mr. Gerard reports receipt of a note from the German Foreign Office, dated December 26, 1916, as follows:

“FOREIGN OFFICE,
“Berlin, December 26, 1916.

“With reference to the esteemed communication of December 21, Foreign Office No. 15118, the undersigned has the honor to reply as follows: To His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America, Mr. James W. Gerard.

“The Imperial Government has accepted and considered in the friendly spirit which is apparent in the communication of the President, noble initiative of the President looking to the creation of bases for the foundation of a lasting peace. The President discloses the aim which lies next to his heart and leaves the choice of the way open. A direct exchange of views appears to the Imperial Government as the most suitable way of arriving at the desired result. The Imperial Government has the honor, therefore, in the sense of its declaration of the 12th instant, which offered the hand for peace negotiations, to propose the speedy assembly, on neutral ground, of delegates of the warring States.

“It is also the view of the Imperial Government that the great work for the prevention of future wars can first be taken up only after the ending of the present conflict of exhaustion. The Imperial Government is ready, when this point has been reached, to cooperate with the United States at this sublime task.

“The undersigned, while permitting himself to have recourse to good offices of His Excellency the Ambassador in connection with the transmission of the above reply to the President of the United

¹Official print of the Department of State.

States, avails himself of this opportunity to renew the assurances of his highest consideration.

“ZIMMERMAN.”

**Austro-Hungarian Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note,
December 26, 1916¹**

Ambassador Penfield to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Vienna, December 26, 1916.

Following, dated December 26, received to-day from Austro-Hungarian Ministry for Foreign Affairs:

“AIDE MEMOIRE

“In reply to the *aide memoire* communicated on the 22d instant by His Excellency the American Ambassador, containing the proposals of the President of the United States of America for an exchange of views among the powers at present at war for the eventual establishment of peace, the Imperial and Royal Government desires particularly to point out that in considering the noble proposal of the President it is guided by the same spirit of amity and complaisance as finds expression therein.

“The President desires to establish a basis for a lasting peace without wishing to indicate the ways and means. The Imperial and Royal Government considers a direct exchange of views among the belligerents to be the most suitable way of attaining this end. Adverting to its declaration of the 12th instant, in which it announced its readiness to enter into peace negotiations, it now has the honor to propose that representatives of the belligerent powers convene at an early date at some place on neutral ground.

“The Imperial and Royal Government likewise concurs in the opinion of the President that only after the termination of the present war will it be possible to undertake the great and desirable work of the prevention of future wars. At an appropriate time it will be willing to cooperate with the United States of America for the realization of this noble aim.”

PENFIELD.

¹Official print of the Department of State.

Turkish Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 26,
1916¹

Ambassador Elkus to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Constantinople, December 26, 1916.

In reply to the President's message communicated to the Sublime Porte on the 23d instant, Minister for Foreign Affairs handed me to-day a note of which the following is a translation:

"MR. AMBASSADOR: In reply to the note which Your Excellency was pleased to deliver to me under date of the twenty-third instant, number 2107, containing certain suggestions of the President of the United States, I have the honor to communicate to Your Excellency the following:

"The generous initiative of the President, tending to create bases for the reestablishment of peace, has been received and taken into consideration by the Imperial Ottoman Government in the same friendly obliging (?) which manifests itself in the President's communication. The President indicates the object which he has at heart and leaves open the choice of that path leading to this object. The Imperial Government considers a direct exchange of ideas as the most efficacious means of attaining the desired result.

"In conformity with its declaration of the twelfth of this month, in which it stretched forth its hand for peace negotiations, the Imperial Government has the honor of proposing the immediate meeting, in a neutral country, of delegates of the belligerent powers.

"The Imperial Government is likewise of opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can only be commenced after the end of the present struggle between the nations. When this moment shall have arrived the Imperial Government will be pleased [to] collaborate with the United States of America and with the other neutral powers in this sublime task.

"(Signed) HALIL."
ELKUS.

Austro-Hungarian Reply to the Swiss Peace Note, December 27,
1916²

[TRANSLATION]

The undersigned, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has had the honor

¹Official print of the Department of State.

²*Le Figaro*, Paris, December 28, 1916.

to receive the esteemed note of December 23d, in which the Minister Plenipotentiary of Switzerland, Dr. Burckhardt, was good enough to communicate to us, under instructions, the desire of the Swiss Federal Council to endorse the initiative taken by the President of the United States with the belligerent Governments for the purpose of ending the present war and of effectively providing against all war in the future.

The noble efforts of President Wilson received a most cordial welcome from the Imperial and Royal Government, to which it gave expression in the note delivered yesterday to the American Ambassador at Vienna, a copy of which is attached hereto with the request that the Minister of Switzerland be good enough to bring this document to the attention of the Swiss Federal Council.

The undersigned, Minister for Foreign Affairs, permits himself to add that the Imperial and Royal Government views the endorsement by the Federal Government of the efforts of President Wilson as the expression of the noble and humanitarian sentiments which Switzerland has manifested since the beginning of the war with regard to all the belligerent Powers and which it has put in practice in so generous and friendly a manner.

German Reply to the Swiss Peace Note, December 28, 1916¹

The Imperial Government has taken note of the fact that the Swiss Federal Council, as a result of its having placed itself in communication some time ago with the President of the United States of America, is also ready to take action side by side with them towards bringing about an understanding between the belligerent nations and towards the attainment of a lasting peace. The spirit of true humanity by which the step of the Swiss Federal Council is inspired is fully appreciated and esteemed by the Imperial Government.

The Imperial Government has informed the President of the United States that a direct exchange of views seems to them to be the most suitable means of obtaining the desired result. Led by the same considerations which caused Germany on December 12 to offer her hand for peace negotiations, the German Government has proposed an immediate meeting of delegates of all the belligerents at a neutral

¹*The Times*, London, December 29, 1916.

place. In agreement with the President of the United States the Imperial Government is of opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can only be taken in hand after the present world war has terminated. As soon as that moment has come they will be joyfully ready to cooperate in this sublime task.

If Switzerland, which, faithful to the country's noble traditions in mitigating the sufferings caused by the present war, has deserved imperishable merit, will also contribute to safeguarding the world's peace, the German nation and Government will highly welcome that.

**Scandinavian Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note,
December 29, 1916¹**

It is with the liveliest interest that the Norwegian Government has learned of the proposals which the President of the United States has just made with the purpose of facilitating measures looking toward the establishment of a durable peace, while at the same time seeking to avoid any interference which could cause offense to legitimate sentiments.

The Norwegian Government would consider itself failing in its duties toward its own people and toward humanity if it did not express its deepest sympathy with all efforts which would contribute to put an end to the ever-increasing suffering and the moral and material losses. It has every hope that the initiative of President Wilson will arrive at a result worthy of the high purpose which inspires it.

**Entente Reply to the Peace Note of Germany and Her Allies,
December 30, 1916²**

The Allied Governments of Russia, France, Great Britain, Japan, Italy, Serbia, Belgium, Montenegro, Portugal and Roumania, united for the defence of the freedom of nations and faithful to their undertakings not to lay down their arms except in common accord, have decided to return a joint answer to the illusory peace proposals which

¹*The New York Times*, December 30, 1916. Identical note of Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

²*The Times*, London, January 1, 1917.

have been addressed to them by the Governments of the enemy Powers through the intermediary of the United States, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

As a prelude to any reply, the Allied Powers feel bound to protest strongly against the two material assertions made in the note from the enemy Powers, the one professing to throw upon the Allies the responsibility of the war, and the other proclaiming the victory of the Central Powers.

The Allies can not admit a claim which is thus untrue in each particular, and is sufficient alone to render sterile all attempt at negotiations.

The Allied nations have for 30 months been engaged in [*subissent*—have had to endure] a war which they had done everything to avoid. They have shown by their actions their devotion to peace. This devotion is as strong to-day as it was in 1914; and after the violation by Germany of her solemn engagements, Germany's promise is no sufficient foundation on which to re-establish the peace which she broke.

A mere suggestion, without statement of terms, that negotiations should be opened, is not an offer of peace. The putting forward by the Imperial Government of a sham [*prétendue*—pretended] proposal, lacking all substance and precision, would appear to be less an offer of peace than a war manœuvre.

It is founded on a calculated misinterpretation of the character of the struggle in the past, the present, and the future.

As for the past, the German note takes no account of the facts, dates, and figures which establish that the war was desired, provoked, and declared by Germany and Austria-Hungary.

At the Hague Conference it was the German delegate who refused all proposals for disarmament. In July, 1914, it was Austria-Hungary who, after having addressed to Serbia an unprecedented ultimatum, declared war upon her in spite of the satisfaction which had at once been accorded. The Central Empires then rejected all attempts made by the Entente to bring about a pacific solution of a purely local conflict. Great Britain suggested a Conference, France proposed an International Commission, the Emperor of Russia asked the German Emperor to go to arbitration, and Russia and Austria-Hungary came to an understanding on the eve of the conflict; but to all these efforts Germany gave neither answer nor effect. Belgium was invaded by an Empire which had guaranteed her neutrality and which has had the assurance to proclaim that treaties were "scraps of paper" and that "necessity knows no law."

At the present moment these sham [*prétendues*—pretended] offers on the part of Germany rest on a "War Map" of Europe alone, which represents nothing more than a superficial and passing phase of the situation, and not the real strength of the belligerents. A peace concluded upon these terms would be only to the advantage of the aggressors, who, after imagining that they would reach their goal in two months, discovered after two years that they could never attain it.

As for the future, the disasters caused by the German declaration of war and the innumerable outrages committed by Germany and her Allies against both belligerents and neutrals demand penalties [*sanctions*—retribution], reparation, and guarantees; Germany avoids the mention of any of these.

In reality these overtures made by the Central Powers are nothing more than a calculated attempt to influence the future course of the war, and to end it by imposing a German peace.

The object of these overtures is to create dissension in public opinion [*troubler l'opinion*—disturb opinion] in allied countries. But that public opinion has, in spite of all the sacrifices endured by the Allies, already given its answer with admirable firmness, and has denounced the empty pretence [*vide*—emptiness] of the declaration of the Enemy Powers.

They have the further object of stiffening public opinion in Germany and in the countries allied to her; one and all, already severely tried by their losses, worn out by economic pressure and crushed by the supreme effort which has been imposed upon their inhabitants.

They endeavour to deceive and intimidate public opinion in neutral countries whose inhabitants have long since made up their minds where the initial responsibility rests, have recognized existing responsibilities, and are far too enlightened to favour the designs of Germany by abandoning the defence of human freedom.

Finally, these overtures attempt to justify in advance in the eyes of the world a new series of crimes—submarine warfares, deportations, forced labour and forced enlistment of inhabitants against their own countries, and violations of neutrality.

Fully conscious of the gravity of this moment, but equally conscious of its requirements, the Allied Governments, closely united to one another and in perfect sympathy with their peoples, refuse to consider a proposal which is empty and insincere.

Once again the Allies declare that no peace is possible so long as they have not secured reparation of violated rights and liberties,

recognition of the principle of nationalities, and of the free existence of small states; so long as they have not brought about a settlement calculated to end, once and for all, forces [*causes*—causes] which have contributed a perpetual menace to the nations [*qui depuis si longtemps ont menacé les nations*—which have so long threatened the nations], and to afford the only effective guarantees for the future security of the world. . .

In conclusion, the Allied Powers think it necessary to put forward the following considerations, which show the special situation of Belgium after two and a half years of war.

In virtue of international treaties, signed by five great European Powers, of whom Germany was one, Belgium enjoyed, before the war, a special status, rendering her territory inviolable and placing her, under the guarantee of the Powers, outside all European conflicts. She was however, in spite of these treaties, the first to suffer the aggression of Germany. For this reason the Belgian Government think it necessary to define the aims which Belgium has never ceased to pursue, while fighting side by side with the Entente Powers for right and justice.

Belgium has always scrupulously fulfilled the duties which her neutrality imposed upon her. She has taken up arms to defend her independence and her neutrality violated by Germany, and to show that she remains faithful [*et pour rester fidèle*—and to be true] to her international obligations. On August 4, 1914, in the Reichstag, the German Chancellor admitted that this aggression constituted an injustice contrary to the laws of nations and pledged himself in the name of Germany to repair it.

During two and a half years this injustice has been cruelly aggravated by the proceedings of the occupying forces, which have exhausted the resources of the country, ruined its industries, devastated its towns and villages, and have been responsible for innumerable massacres, executions and imprisonments. At this very moment, while Germany is proclaiming peace and humanity to the world, she is deporting Belgian citizens by thousands and reducing them to slavery.

Belgium before the war asked for nothing but to live in harmony with all her neighbours. Her King and her Government have but one aim—the re-establishment of peace and justice [*droit*—right]. But they only desire [desire only] a peace which would assure to their country legitimate reparation, guarantees, and safeguards for the future.

Bulgarian Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 30, 1916¹

Consul General Murphy to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
Sofia, December 30, 1916.

Referring circular eighteenth.

Bulgarian foreign minister responds following:

"I have had the honor to receive the letter you were pleased to address to me on the 28th of this month to acquaint me with the step taken by Mr. President Wilson in favor of peace, and I hasten to communicate to you the following answer of the Bulgarian Government:

"The generous initiative of the President of the United States tending to create bases for the restoration of peace, was cordially received and taken into consideration by the Royal Government in the same friendly spirit which is evidenced by the presidential communication. The President indicates the object he has at heart and leaves open the choice of the way leading to that object. The Royal Government considers a direct exchange of views to be the most efficacious way to attain the desired end. In accordance with its declaration of the 12th of December inst., which extends a hand for peace negotiations, it has the honor to propose an immediate meeting at one place of delegates of the belligerent powers. The Royal Government shares the view that the great undertaking which consists in preventing future war can only be initiated after the close of present conflict of nations. When that time comes, the Royal Government will be glad to cooperate with the United States of America and other neutral nations in that sublime endeavor.

"Be pleased to accept, Mr. Consul General, the assurances of my high consideration.

"(Signed) DOCTOR RADOSLAVOFF."

MURPHY.

King Constantine's Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note,
December 30, 1916²

I wish to express, Mr. President, feelings of sincere admiration and lively sympathy for the generous initiative you have just taken

¹Official print of the Department of State.

²*The New York Times*, January 1, 1917. For the formal reply of the Greek Government, see *post*, p. 67.

with the view to ascertaining whether the moment is not propitious for a negotiable end of the bloody struggle raging on earth.

Coming from the wise statesman who, in a period so critical for humanity, is placed at the head of the great American Republic, this humanitarian effort, dictated by a spirit of high political sagacity and looking to an honorable peace for all, can not but contribute greatly toward hastening re-establishment of normal life and assuring through a stable state of international relations the evolution of humanity toward that progress wherein the United States of America always so largely shares.

[Here follows a recital of the trials Greece has suffered from the war.]

Such are the conditions in which your proposals find my country. This short and necessarily incomplete recital is not made with the purpose of criticism of the cruel blows at her sovereignty and neutrality from which Greece has been forced to suffer the effects. I have merely wished to show you, Mr. President, how much the soul of Greece at this moment longs for peace, and how much it appreciates your proposals, which constitute so important a step in the course of the bloody world tragedy of which we are witnesses.

CONSTANTINE

Spanish Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, December 30, 1916¹

His Majesty's Government has received through your embassy a copy of the note which the President of the United States has presented to the belligerent powers, expressing the desire that an early opportunity should be sought for obtaining from all the nations now at war a declaration as to their intentions so far as regards the bases upon which the conflict might be terminated. This copy is accompanied by another note, signed by yourself, and dated December 22, in which your embassy, in accordance with the instructions of your Government, says, in the name of the President, that the moment seems to be opportune for action on the part of his Majesty's Government, and that it should, if it thinks fit, support the attitude adopted by the Government of the United States.

With regard to the reasonable desire manifested by the latter Government to be supported in its proposition in favor of peace, the Gov-

¹*Current History*, New York, February, 1917, p. 792.

ernment of his Majesty, considering that the initiative has been taken by the President of the North American Republic, and that the diverse impressions which it has caused are already known, is of opinion that the action to which the United States invites Spain would not have efficacy, and the more so because the Central Empires have already expressed their firm intention to discuss the conditions of peace solely with the belligerent powers.

Fully appreciating that the noble desire of the President of the United States will always merit the gratitude of all nations, the Government of his Majesty is decided not to dissociate itself from any negotiation or agreement destined to facilitate the humanitarian work which will put an end to the present war, but it suspends its action, reserving it for the moment when the efforts of all those who desire peace will be more useful and efficacious than is now the case, if there should then be reasons to consider that its initiative or its intervention would be profitable.

Until that moment arrives the Government of his Majesty regards it as opportune to declare that in all that concerns an understanding between the neutral powers for the defense of their material interests affected by the war, it is disposed now, as it has been since the beginning of the present conflict, to enter into negotiations which may tend toward an agreement capable of uniting all the non-belligerent powers which may consider themselves injured or may regard it as necessary to remedy or diminish such injuries.

Declaration of Premier Radoslavoff in the Bulgarian Sobranje, December 30, 1916¹

I can assure you that Bulgaria's work has been brought to a successful conclusion. To those who assert that we are asking too much I reply that we are no Chauvinists, but that we are aware of the aspirations of the Bulgarian people. You know from the Royal Manifesto issued when war was declared what Bulgarian aspirations are. I am not obliged to reply to each speaker individually.

[Dr. Radoslavoff declared that the peace proposals had been received with enthusiasm in neutral countries. Besides Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, he understood that Holland and Spain were preparing to support the *démarche* of President Wilson. Bulgaria's

¹*The Times*, London, January 2, 1917.

alliance with the Central Empires and Turkey had not weakened. They were ready to conclude peace because they wished to see an end of war. They would make concessions in the name of humanity and for the welfare of all nations.]

Austro-Hungarian Reply to the Scandinavian Peace Note, January 1, 1917¹

The Austro-Hungarian Government is glad to state that its views in this matter agree with yours. It has sympathetically accepted President Wilson's suggestions, and therefore with satisfaction sees Sweden, Denmark, and Norway support President Wilson's initiative.

Statement of Emile Vandervelde, Belgian Minister of State, on the Peace Proposals²

From clandestine inquiries which I have been able to make among the popular leaders in the occupied part of Belgium since the publication of the German peace proposals I believe that the Belgian people are in complete accord with their Government in the attitude it has assumed towards the Chancellor's note. There must be no annexation if the peace following this war is to prevent other wars. That is one of the reasons why it would be futile even to comment upon the suggestion from German sources that the Germans are willing to abandon Belgium in exchange for the Belgian Congo.

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There is no complaint of your President's action among the Belgian people. We believe that Mr. Wilson acted wholly in the spirit of humanitarianism, and that the steps he has taken will help rather than harm our cause. A comparison of the Allies' expression of views and our enemies' will suffice, I think, to convince the United States of the insincerity of Germany's attitude and the impossibility of discussing her present proposals.

It is very possible, however, that as her need for peace, which I believe to be very great, grows more pronounced, Germany will come

¹*The New York Times*, January 2, 1917. See footnote, *ante*, p. 33.

²*The Times*, London, January 9, 1917.

forward with more reasonable proposals. It would then become necessary for us to scrutinize such future offers as closely as we have those already formulated and declined.

The incredible, brutal slave traffic in which the Germans are now engaged in Belgium, against which your Government has raised its voice, has only served to increase my compatriots' horror of a peace imposed by Berlin. *

Chinese Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, January 9, 1917¹

Minister Reinsch to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN LEGATION,
Peking, January 9, 1917.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has written as follows in answer to my note transmitting the President's note to the belligerent powers:

"I have examined, with the care which the gravity of the questions raised demands, the note concerning peace which President Wilson has addressed to the Governments of the Allies and the Central Powers now at war and the text of which Your Excellency has been good enough to transmit to me under instructions of your Government.

"China, a nation traditionally pacific, has recently again manifested her sentiments in concluding treaties concerning the pacific settlement of international disputes, responding thus to the (. . . .)² of the peace conferences held at The Hague.

"On the other hand the present war, by its prolongation, has seriously affected the interests of China more so perhaps than those of other powers which have remained neutral. She is at present at a time of reorganization which demands economically and industrially the cooperation of foreign countries, cooperation which a large number of them are unable to accord on account of the war in which they are engaged.

"In manifesting her sympathy for the spirit of the President's note, having in view the ending as soon as possible of the hostilities, China

¹Official print of the Department of State.

²Apparent omission.

is but acting in conformity with not only her interest but also with her profound sentiments.

"On account of the extent which modern wars are apt to assume and the repercussion which they bring about, their effects are no longer limited to belligerent states. All countries are interested in seeing wars becoming as rare as possible. Consequently China can not but show satisfaction with the views of the Government and people of the United States of America who declare themselves ready and even eager to cooperate when the war is over by all proper means to assure the respect of the principle of the equality of nations whatever their power may be and to relieve them of the peril of wrong and violence. China is ready to join her efforts with theirs for the attainment of such results which can only be obtained through the help of all."

REINSCH.

Entente Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, January 10, 1917¹

Ambassador Sharp to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Paris, January 10, 1917.

The following is the translation of the French note:

"The Allied Governments have received the note which was delivered to them in the name of the Government of the United States on the nineteenth of December, 1916. They have studied it with the care imposed upon them both by the exact realization which they have of the gravity of the hour and by the sincere friendship which attaches them to the American people.

"In general way they wish to declare that they pay tribute to the elevation of the sentiment with which the American note is inspired and that they associate themselves with all their hopes with the project for the creation of a league of nations to insure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognize all the advantages for the cause of humanity and civilization which the institution of international agreements, destined to avoid violent conflicts between nations would prevent; agreements which must imply the sanctions necessary to insure their execution and thus to prevent an apparent security from only facilitating new aggressions. But a discussion of future arrange-

¹Official print of the Department of State.

ments destined to insure an enduring peace presupposes a satisfactory settlement of the actual conflict; the Allies have as profound a desire as the Government of the United States to terminate as soon as possible a war for which the Central Empires are responsible and which inflicts such cruel sufferings upon humanity. But they believe that it is impossible at the present moment to attain a peace which will assure them reparation, restitution and such guarantees to which they are entitled by the aggression for which the responsibility rests with the Central Powers and of which the principle itself tended to ruin the security of Europe; a peace which would on the other hand permit the establishment of the future of European nations on a solid basis. The Allied nations are conscious that they are not fighting for selfish interests, but above all to safeguard the independence of peoples, of right and of humanity.

"The Allies are fully aware of the losses and suffering which the war causes to neutrals as well as to belligerents and they deplore them; but they do not hold themselves responsible for them, having in no way either willed or provoked this war, and they strive to reduce these damages in the measure compatible with the inexorable exigencies of their defense against the violence and the wiles of the enemy.

"It is with satisfaction therefore that they take note of the declaration that the American communication is in nowise associated in its origin with that of the Central Powers transmitted on the eighteenth of December by the Government of the United States. They did not doubt moreover the resolution of that Government to avoid even the appearance of a support, even moral, of the authors responsible for the war.

"The Allied Governments believe that they must protest in the most friendly but in the most specific manner against the assimilation established in the American note between the two groups of belligerents; this assimilation, based upon public declarations by the Central Powers, is in direct opposition to the evidence, both as regards responsibility for the past and as concerns guarantees for the future; President Wilson in mentioning it certainly had no intention of associating himself with it.

"If there is an historical fact established at the present date, it is the willful aggression of Germany and Austria-Hungary to insure their hegemony over Europe and their economic domination over the world. Germany proved by her declaration of war, by the immediate violation of Belgium and Luxemburg and by her manner of conducting the war, her simulating contempt for all principles of humanity and all

respect for small States; as the conflict developed the attitude of the Central Powers and their Allies has been a continual defiance of humanity and civilization. Is it necessary to recall the horrors which accompanied the invasion of Belgium and Servia, the atrocious *régime* imposed upon the invaded countries, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities perpetrated against the populations of Syria, the raids of Zeppelins on open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger steamers and of merchantmen even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted upon prisoners of war, the juridical murders of Miss Cavel, of Captain Fryatt, the deportation and the reduction to slavery of civil populations, *et cetera*? The execution of such a series of crimes perpetrated without any regard for universal reprobation fully explains to President Wilson the protest of the Allies.

"They consider that the note which they sent to the United States in reply to the German note will be a response to the questions put by the American Government, and according to the exact words of the latter, constitute 'a public declaration as to the conditions upon which the war could be terminated.'

"President Wilson desires more: he desires that the belligerent powers openly affirm the objects which they seek by continuing the war; the Allies experience no difficulty in replying to this request. Their objects in the war are well known; they have been formulated on many occasions by the chiefs of their divers Governments. Their objects in the war will not be made known in detail with all the equitable compensations and indemnities for damages suffered until the hour of negotiations. But the civilized world knows that they imply in all necessity and in the first instance the restoration of Belgium, of Servia, and of Montenegro and the indemnities which are due them; the evacuation of the invaded territories of France, of Russia and of Roumania with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe guaranteed by a stable *régime* and founded as much upon respect of nationalities and full security and liberty economic development, which all nations, great or small, possess, as upon territorial conventions and international agreements suitable to guarantee territorial and maritime frontiers against unjustified attacks; the restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the Allies by force or against the will of their populations, the liberation of Italians, of Slavs, of Roumanians and of Tcheco Slovaques from foreign domination; the enfranchisement of populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; the expulsion from Europe of the Ottoman

Empire decidedly (. . .)¹ to western civilization. The intentions of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia regarding Poland have been clearly indicated in the proclamation which he has just addressed to his armies. It goes without saying that if the Allies wish to liberate Europe from the brutal covetousness of Prussian militarism, it never has been their design, as has been alleged, to encompass the extermination of the German peoples and their political disappearance. That which they desire above all is to insure a peace upon the principles of liberty and justice, upon the inviolable fidelity to international obligation with which the Government of the United States has never ceased to be inspired.

"United in the pursuits of this supreme object the Allies are determined, individually and collectively, to act with all their power and to consent to all sacrifices to bring to a victorious close a conflict upon which they are convinced not only their own safety and prosperity depends but also the future of civilization itself."

SHARP.

Belgian Note supplementary to the Entente Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, January 10, 1917²

Ambassador Sharp to the Secretary of State

[TELEGRAM]

AMERICAN EMBASSY,
Paris, January 10, 1917.

Copy of Belgian note as follows:

"The Government of the King, which has associated itself with the answer handed by the President of the French Council to the American Ambassador on behalf of all, is particularly desirous of paying tribute to the sentiment of humanity which prompted the President of the United States to send his note to the belligerent powers and it highly esteems the friendship expressed for Belgium through his kindly intermediation. It desires as much as Mr. Woodrow Wilson to see the present war ended as early as possible.

"But the President seems to believe that the statesmen of the two opposing camps pursue the same objects of war. The example of Belgium unfortunately demonstrates that this is in no wise the fact.

¹Apparent omission.

²Official print of the Department of State.

Belgium has never, like the Central Powers, aimed at conquests. The barbarous fashion in which the German Government has treated, and is still treating, the Belgium nation, does not permit the supposition that Germany will preoccupy herself with guaranteeing in the future the rights of the weak nations which she has not ceased to trample under foot since the war, let loose by her, began to desolate Europe. On the other hand, the Government of the King has noted with pleasure and with confidence the assurances that the United States is impatient to cooperate in the measures which will be taken after the conclusion of peace, to protect and guarantee the small nations against violence and oppression.

"Previous to the German ultimatum, Belgium only aspired to live upon good terms with all her neighbors; she practiced with scrupulous loyalty towards each one of them the duties imposed by her neutrality. In the same manner she has been rewarded by Germany, for the confidence she placed in her, through which, from one day to the other, without any plausible reason, her neutrality was violated, and the Chancellor of the Empire when announcing to the Reichstag this violation of right and of treaties, was obliged to recognize the iniquity of such an act and predetermine that it would be repaired. But the Germans, after the occupation of Belgian territory, have displayed no better observance of the rules of international law or the stipulations of the Hague Convention. They have, by taxation, as heavy as it is arbitrary, drained the resources of the country; they have intentionally ruined its industries, destroyed whole cities, put to death and imprisoned a considerable number of inhabitants. Even now, while they are loudly proclaiming their desire to put an end to the horrors of war, they increase the rigors of the occupation by deporting into servitude Belgian workers by the thousands.

"If there is a country which has the right to say that it has taken up arms to defend its existence, it is assuredly Belgium. Compelled to fight or to submit to shame, she passionately desires that an end be brought to the unprecedented sufferings of her population. But she could only accept a peace which would assure her, as well as equitable reparation, security and guarantees for the future.

"The American people, since the beginning of the war, has manifested for the oppressed Belgian nation, its most ardent sympathy. It is an American committee, the Commission for Relief in Belgium which, in close union with the Government of the King and the National Committee, displays an untiring devotion and marvelous activity in re-victualling Belgium. The Government of the King is happy

to avail itself of this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the Commission for Relief as well as to the generous Americans eager to relieve the misery of the Belgian population. Finally, nowhere more than in the United States have the abductions and deportations of Belgian civilians provoked such a spontaneous movement of protestation and indignant reproof.

"These facts, entirely to the honor of the American nation, allow the Government of the King to entertain the legitimate hope that at the time of the definitive settlement of this long war, the voice of the Entente Powers will find in the United States a unanimous echo to claim in favor of the Belgian nation, innocent victim of German ambition and covetousness, the rank and the place which its irreproachable past, the valor of its soldiers, its fidelity to honor and its remarkable faculties for work assign to it among the civilized nations."

SHARP.

German Note to Neutral Powers relative to the Entente Reply to the Peace Proposals, January 11, 1917¹

The Imperial Government is aware that the Government of the United States of America, the Royal Spanish Government, and the Swiss Government have received the reply of their enemies to the note of December 12, in which Germany, in concert with her allies, proposed to enter forthwith into peace negotiations. Our enemies rejected this proposal, arguing that it was a proposal without sincerity and without meaning. The form in which they couched their communication makes a reply to them impossible. But the German Government thinks it important to communicate to the neutral Powers its view of the state of affairs.

The Central Powers have no reason to enter again into a controversy regarding the origin of the world war. History will judge on whom the blame of the war falls. Its judgment will as little pass over the encircling policy of England, the *revanche* policy of France, and Russia's aspiration after Constantinople as over the provocation by Serbia, the Serajevo murders, and the complete Russian mobilization, which meant war on Germany.

Germany and her allies, who were obliged to take up arms to defend their freedom and their existence, regard this, which was

¹*The Times*, London, January 13, 1917.

their war aim, as attained. On the other hand, the enemy Powers have departed more and more from the realization of their plans, which, according to the statements of their responsible statesmen, are directed, among other things, toward the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine and several Prussian provinces, the humiliation and diminution of Austria-Hungary, the disintegration of Turkey, and the dismemberment of Bulgaria. In view of such war aims, the demand for reparation, restitution, and guarantees in the mouth of our enemies sounds strange.

Our enemies describe the peace offer of the four allied powers as a war manœuvre. Germany and her allies most emphatically protest against such a falsification of their motives, which they openly stated. Their conviction was that a just peace acceptable to all belligerents was possible, that it could be brought about, and that further bloodshed could not be justified. Their readiness to make known their peace conditions without reservation at the opening of negotiations disproves any doubt of their sincerity.

Our enemies, in whose power it was to examine the real value of our offer neither made any examination nor made counter-proposals. Instead of that, they declared that peace was impossible so long as the restoration of violated rights and liberties, the acknowledgment of the principle of nationalities, and the free existence of small States were not guaranteed. The sincerity which our enemies deny to the proposal of the four allied Powers can not be allowed by the world to these demands if it recalls the fate of the Irish people, the destruction of the freedom and independence of the Boer Republics, the subjection of Northern Africa by England, France and Italy, the suppression of foreign nationalities in Russia, and, finally, the oppression of Greece, which is unexampled in history.

Moreover, in regard to the alleged violation of international rights by the four allied Powers, those Powers which, from the beginning of the war, have trampled upon right and torn up the treaties on which it was based have no right to protest. Already in the first weeks of the war England had renounced the Declaration of London, the contents of which her own delegates had recognized as binding in international law, and in the further course of the war she most seriously violated the Declaration of Paris, so that, owing to arbitrary measures, a state of lawlessness began in the war at sea. The starvation campaign against Germany and the pressure on neutrals exercised in England's interest are no less grossly contrary to the rules of international law than to the laws of humanity.

Equally inconsistent with international law and the principles of civilization is the employment of coloured troops in Europe and the extension of the war to Africa, which has been brought about in violation of existing treaties. It undermines the reputation of the white race in this part of the globe. The inhumane treatment of the prisoners, especially in Africa and Russia, the deportation of the civil population from East Prussia, Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia, and the Bukovina are further proofs of our enemies' disregard for right and civilization.

At the end of their note of December 30, our enemies refer to the special position of Belgium. The Imperial Government is unable to admit that the Belgian Government has always observed its obligations. Already before the war Belgium was under the influence of England and leaned towards England and France, thereby herself violating the spirit of the treaties which guaranteed her independence and neutrality.

Twice the Imperial Government declared to the Belgian Government that it was not entering Belgium as an enemy, and entreated it to save the country from the horrors of war. In this case it offered Belgium a guarantee for the full integrity and independence of the kingdom and to pay for all the damage which might be caused by German troops marching through the country. It is known that in 1887 the Royal British Government was determined not to oppose on these conditions the claiming of a right of way through Belgium. The Belgian Government refused the repeated offer of the Imperial Government. On it and on those Powers who induced it to take up this attitude falls the responsibility for the fate which befell Belgium.

The accusation about German war methods in Belgium and the measures which were taken there in the interest of military safety have been repeatedly repudiated as untrue by the Imperial Government. It again emphatically protests against these calumnies.

Germany and her allies made an honest attempt to terminate the war and pave the way for an understanding among the belligerents. The Imperial Government declares that it solely depended on the decision of our enemies whether the road to peace should be taken or not. The enemy Governments have refused to take this road. On them falls the full responsibility for the continuation of bloodshed.

But the four allied Powers will prosecute the fight with calm trust and confidence in their good cause until a peace has been gained which guarantees to their own peoples honour, existence, freedom,

and development, and gives all the Powers of the European Continent the benefit of working united in mutual esteem at the solution of the great problems of civilization.

Extracts from the Austro-Hungarian Note to Neutral Powers relative to the Entente Reply to the Peace Proposals, January 11, 1917¹

In the years preceding the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia the Monarchy displayed sufficient proof of its forbearance toward the ever-increasing hostility, aggressive intentions, and intrigues of Serbia until the moment when finally the notorious murders at Serajevo made further indulgence impossible.

The question as to on which side the military situation is the stronger appears idle, and may confidently be left to the judgment of the world. The four allied powers now look on their purely defensive war aims as attained, while their enemies travel further and further from the realization of their plans.

For the enemy to characterize our peace proposals as meaningless before peace negotiations were begun, and so long as, therefore, our peace conditions are unknown, is merely to make an arbitrary assertion. We had made full preparations for the acceptance of our offer to make known our peace conditions on entering into the negotiations. We declared ourselves ready to end the war by a verbal exchange of views with the enemy Governments, and it depended solely on our enemies' decision whether peace were brought about or not.

Before God and mankind we repudiate responsibility for continuance of the war.

Premier Lloyd George's Guildhall Address, January 11, 1917²

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his extremely lucid and impressive speech, has placed before you the business side of his proposal, and I think you will agree with me, after his explanation of his scheme, that he has offered for subscription a Loan which contains all the essential ingredients of an attractive investment. They are the most

¹*The New York Times*, January 13, 1917.

²*The Times*, London, January 12, 1917.

generous terms the Government could offer without injury to the taxpayer. I agree that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was right in offering such liberal terms, because it is important that we should secure a big loan now—not merely in order to enable us to finance the war effectively, but as a demonstration of the continued resolve of this country to prosecute it. And it is upon that aspect of the question that I should like to say a few words.

The German Kaiser a few days ago sent a message to his people that the Allies had rejected his peace offer. He did so in order to drug those whom he can no longer drag. Where are those offers? We have asked for them. We have never seen them. We were not offered terms; we were offered a trap baited with fair words. They tempted us once, but the Lion has his eyes open now. We have rejected no terms that we have ever seen. Of course, it would suit them to have peace at the present moment on their own terms. We all want peace; but when we get it, it must be a real peace. The Allied Powers separately, and in council together, have come to the same conclusion. Knowing well what war means, knowing especially what this war means in suffering, in burdens, in horror, they have decided that even war is better than peace—peace at the Prussian price of domination over Europe. We made that clear in our reply to Germany; we made it still clearer in our reply to the United States of America. Before we attempt to rebuild the temple of peace we must see now that the foundations are solid. They were built before upon the shifting sands of Prussian faith; henceforth, when the time for rebuilding comes, it must be on the rock of vindicated justice.

I have just returned from a council of war of the four great Allied countries upon whose shoulders most of the burden of this terrible war falls. I can not give you the conclusions: there might be useful information in them for the enemy. There were no delusions as to the magnitude of our task; neither were there any doubts about the result. I think I could say what was the feeling of every man there. It was one of the most business-like conferences that I ever attended. We faced the whole situation, probed it thoroughly, looked the difficulties in the face, and made arrangements to deal with them—and we separated more confident than ever. All felt that if victory were difficult, defeat was impossible. There was no flinching, no wavering, no faint-heartedness, no infirmity of purpose. There was a grim resolution at all costs that we must achieve the high aim with which we accepted the challenge of the Prussian military caste

and rid Europe and the world for ever of its menace. No country could have refused that challenge without loss of honour. No one could have rejected it without impairing national security. No one could have failed to take it up without forfeiting something which is of greater value to every free and self-respecting people than life itself.

These nations did not enter into the war light-heartedly. They did not embark upon this enterprise without knowing what it really meant. They were not induced by the prospect of an easy victory. Take this country. The millions of our men who enrolled in the Army enlisted after the German victories of August, 1914—when they knew the accumulative and concentrated power of the German military machine. That is when they placed their lives at the disposal of their country. What about other nations? They knew what they were encountering, that they were fighting an organization which had been perfected for generations by the best brains of Prussia, perfected with one purpose—the subjugation of Europe. And yet they faced it. Why did they do it? I passed through hundreds of miles of the beautiful lands of France and of Italy, and as I did so I asked myself this question, Why did the peasants leave by the million these sunny vineyards and cornfields in France—why did they quit these enchanting valleys, with their comfort, and their security, their calm in Italy—in order to face the dreary and wild horrors of the battlefield? They did it for one purpose and one purpose only. They were not driven to the slaughter by kings. These are great democratic countries. No Government could have lasted twenty-four hours that had forced them into an abhorrent war. Of their own free will they embarked upon it, because they knew a fundamental issue had been raised which no country could have shirked without imperilling all that has been won in the centuries of the past and all that remains to be won in the ages of the future.

That is why, as the war proceeds, and the German purpose becomes more manifest, the conviction has become deeper in the minds of these people that they must break their way through to victory in order to save Europe from unspeakable despotism. That was the spirit which animated the Allied Conference at Rome last week.

But I will tell you one thing that struck me, and strikes me more and more each time that I visit the Continent and attend these conferences. That is the increasing extent to which the Allied peoples are looking to Great Britain. They are trusting to her rugged strength, to her great resources, more and more. To them she

looks like a great tower in the deep. She is becoming more and more the hope of the oppressed and the despair of the oppressor, and I feel more and more confident that we shall not fail the people who put their trust in us. When that arrogant Prussian caste flung the signature of Britain to a treaty into the waste-paper basket as if it were of no account, they knew not the pride of the land they were treating with such insolent disdain. They know it now. Our soldiers and sailors have taught them to respect it.

You have heard the eloquent account of the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the achievements of our soldiers. Our sailors are gallantly defending the honour of our country on the high seas of the world. They have strangled the enemy's commerce, and will continue to do so, in spite of all the piratical devices of the foe. In 1914 and 1915, for two years, a small, ill-equipped Army held up the veterans of Prussia with the best equipment in Europe. In 1916 they hurled them back, and delivered a blow from which they are reeling. In 1917 the Armies of Britain will be more formidable than ever in training, in efficiency, and in equipment, and you may depend upon it that if we give them the necessary support they will cleave a road to victory through all the dangers and perils of the next few months.

But we must support them. They are worth it. Have you ever talked to a soldier who has come back from the front? There is not one of them who will not tell you how he is encouraged and sustained by hearing the roar of the guns behind him. This is what I want to see: I want to see cheques hurtling through the air, fired from the city of London, from every city, town, village, and hamlet throughout the land, fired straight into the intrenchments of the enemy. Every well-directed cheque, well loaded, properly primed, is a more formidable weapon of destruction than a 12-in. shell. It clears the path of the barbed wire entanglements for our gallant fellows to march through. A big loan helps to ensure victory. A big loan will also shorten the war. It will help to save life; it will help to save the British Empire; it will help to save Europe; it will help to save civilization. That is why we want the country to rise to this occasion, and show that the old spirit of Britain, represented by this great British meeting, is still as alive and as alert and as potent as ever.

I want to appeal to the men at home, and to the women also. They have done their part nobly. A man who has been Munitions Minister for twelve months must feel a debt of gratitude to the women

for what they have done. They have helped to win, and without them we could not have done it. I want to make a special appeal, or, rather, to enforce the special appeal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Let no money be squandered in luxury and indulgence which can be put into the fight—and it can, every penny of it. Every ounce counts in this fight. Do not waste it. Do not throw it away. Put it there to help the valour of our brave young boys. Back them up. Let us contribute to assist them. Have greater pride in them than in costlier garments. They will feel prouder of their mothers to-day, and their pride in them will grow in years to come when the best garments will have rotted. It will glisten and glitter. It will improve with the years. They can put it on with old age and say, "This is something I contributed in the Great War," and they will be proud of it.

Men and women of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the first charge—the first charge—upon all your surplus money over your needs for yourselves and your children should be to help those gallant young men of ours who have tendered their lives for the cause of humanity. The more we get the surer the victory. The more we get the shorter the war. The more we get the less it will cost in treasure, and the greatest treasure of all, brave blood. The more we give the more will the nation gain. You will enrich it by your contributions—by your sacrifices. Extravagance—I want to bring this home to every man and woman throughout these Islands—extravagance during the war costs blood—costs blood. And what blood? Valiant blood—the blood of heroes. It would be worth millions to save one of them. A big loan will save myriads of them; help them not merely to win; help them to come home to shout for the victory which they have won. It means better equipment for our troops. It means better equipment for the Allies as well, and this—and I say it now for the fiftieth, if not for the hundredth time—is a war of equipment. That is why we are appealing for your subscriptions. We can do that. Most of us could not do more. But what we can do it is our duty, it is our pride to do.

I said it was a war of equipment. Why are the Germans pressing back our gallant Allies in Roumania? It is not that they are better fighters. They are certainly not. The Roumanian peasant has proved himself to be one of the doughtiest fighters in the field when he has a chance, poor fellow, and he never had much. As for the Russian, the way in which with bare breast he has fought for two years and a half, with inferior guns, insufficient rifles, inadequate sup-

plies of ammunition, is one of the world's tales of heroism. Let us help to equip them, and there will be another story to tell soon.

That is why I am glad to follow the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the appeal which he has made to the patriotism of our race. But with true Scottish instincts he put the appeal to produce first. He laid it down as a good foundation for patriotism and reserved that for his peroration. I shall reverse the order, belonging to a less canny race. I want to say it is a good investment. After all, the old country is the best investment in the world. It was a sound concern before the war; it will be sounder and safer than ever after the war, and especially safer. I do not know the nation that will care to touch it after the war. They had forgotten what we were like in those days; it will take them a long time to forget this lesson. It will be a safer investment than ever and a sounder one.

Have you been watching what has been going on? Before the war we had a good many shortcomings in our business, our commerce and our industry. The war is setting them all right in the most marvelous way. You ask great business men like my friend Lord Pirrie, whom I see there in the corner, what is going on in the factories throughout Great Britain and Ireland. Old machinery scrapped, the newest and the best set up; slipshod, wasteful methods also scrapped, hampering customs discontinued; millions brought into the labour market to help to produce who before were merely consumers. I do not know what the National Debt will be at the end of this war but I will make this prediction. Whatever it is, what is added in real assets to the real riches of the nation will be infinitely greater than any debt that we shall ever acquire. The resources of the nation in every direction developed, directed, perfected, the nation itself disciplined, braced up, quickened, we have become a more alert people. We have thrown off useless tissues. We are a nation that has been taking exercise. We are a different people.

I will tell you another difference. The Prussian menace was a running mortgage which detracted from the value of our national security. Nobody knew what it meant. We know pretty well now. You could not tell whether it meant a mortgage of hundreds of millions, or thousands of millions, and I know you could not tell it would not mean ruin. That mortgage will be cleared off forever and there will be a better security, a better, sounder, safer security, at a better rate of interest. The world will then be able, when the war is over, to attend to its business. There will be no war or rumours of war to disturb and to distract it. We can build up;

we can reconstruct; we can till and cultivate and enrich; and the burden and terror and waste of war will have gone. The best security for peace will be that nations will band themselves together to punish the first peace-breaker. In the armouries of Europe every weapon will be a sword of justice. In the government of men every army will be the constabulary of peace.

There were men who hoped to see this achieved in the ways of peace. We were disappointed. It was ordained that we should not reach that golden era except along a path which itself was paved with gold, yea, and cemented with valiant blood. There are myriads who have given the latter, and there are myriads more ready for the sacrifice if their country needs it. It is for us to contribute the former. Let no man and no woman, in this crisis of their nation's fate, through indolence, greed, avarice, or selfishness, fail. And if they do their part, then, when the time comes for the triumphal march through the darkness and the terror of night into the bright dawn of the morning of the new age, they will each feel that they have their share in it.

British Note of January 13, 1917, amplifying the Entente Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note¹

In sending you a translation of the Allied note I desire to make the following observations, which you should bring to the notice of the United States Government.

I gather from the general tenour of the President's note that, while he is animated by an intense desire that peace should come soon and that when it comes it should be lasting, he does not, for the moment at least, concern himself with the terms on which it should be arranged. His Majesty's Government entirely share the President's ideals; but they feel strongly that the durability of the peace must largely depend on its character and that no stable system of international relations can be built on foundations which are essentially and hopelessly defective.

This becomes clearly apparent if we consider the main conditions which rendered possible the calamities from which the world is now suffering. These were the existence of a Great Power consumed with the lust of domination in the midst of a community of nations ill-

¹*The Times*, London, January 18, 1917.

prepared for defence, plentifully supplied, indeed, with international laws, but with no machinery for enforcing them, and weakened by the fact that neither the boundaries of the various States nor their internal constitution harmonized with the aspirations of their constituent races or secured to them just and equal treatment.

That this last evil would be greatly mitigated if the Allies secured the changes in the map of Europe outlined in their joint note is manifest, and I need not labour the point.

It has been argued, indeed, that the expulsion of the Turks from Europe forms no proper or logical part of this general scheme. The maintenance of the Turkish Empire was, during many generations, regarded by statesmen of world-wide authority as essential to the maintenance of European peace. Why, it is asked, should the cause of peace be now associated with a complete reversal of this traditional policy?

The answer is that circumstances have completely changed. It is unnecessary to consider now whether the creation of a reformed Turkey, mediating between hostile races in the Near East, was a scheme which, had the Sultan been sincere and the Powers united, could ever have been realized. It certainly can not be realized now. The Turkey of "Union and Progress" is at least as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In the hands of Germany it has ceased even in appearance to be a bulwark of peace, and is openly used as an instrument of conquest. Under German officers Turkish soldiers are now fighting in lands from which they had long been expelled, and a Turkish Government controlled, subsidized, and supported by Germany has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end; and we may hope that the expulsion of Turkey from Europe will contribute as much to the cause of peace as the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, of Italia Irredenta to Italy, or any of the other territorial changes indicated in the Allied note.

Evidently, however, such territorial rearrangements, though they may diminish the occasions of war, provide no sufficient security against its recurrence. If Germany, or rather, those in Germany who mold its opinions and control its destinies, again set out to dominate the world, they may find that by the new order of things the adventure is made more difficult, but hardly that it is made impossible. They

may still have ready to their hand a political system organized through and through on a military basis; they may still accumulate vast stores of military equipment; they may still perfect their methods of attack, so that their more pacific neighbours will be struck down before they can prepare themselves for defence. If so, Europe, when the war is over, will be far poorer in men, in money, and in mutual goodwill than it was when the war began, but it will not be safer; and the hopes for the future of the world entertained by the President will be as far as ever from fulfilment.

There are those who think that for this disease international treaties and international laws may provide a sufficient cure. But such persons have ill learned the lessons so clearly taught by recent history. While other nations, notably the United States of America and Britain, were striving by treaties of arbitration to make sure that no chance quarrel should mar the peace they desired to make perpetual, Germany stood aloof. Her historians and philosophers preached the splendors of war; Power was proclaimed as the true end of the State; the General Staff forged with untiring industry the weapons by which at the appointed moment Power might be achieved. These facts proved clearly enough that treaty arrangements for maintaining peace were not likely to find much favour at Berlin; they did not prove that such treaties, once made, would be utterly ineffectual. This became evident only when war had broken out; though the demonstration, when it came, was overwhelming. So long as Germany remains the Germany which, without a shadow of justification, over-ran and barbarously ill-treated a country it was pledged to defend, no State can regard its rights as secure if they have no better protection than a solemn treaty.

The case is made worse by the reflection that these methods of calculated brutality were designed by the Central Powers, not merely to crush to the dust those with whom they were at war, but to intimidate those with whom they were still at peace. Belgium was not only a victim—it was an example. Neutrals were intended to note the outrages which accompanied its conquest, the reign of terror which followed on its occupation, the deportation of a portion of its population, the cruel oppression of the remainder. And, lest the nations happily protected, either by British fleets or by their own, from German armies should suppose themselves safe from German methods, the submarine has (within its limits) assiduously imitated the barbarous practices of the sister service. The War Staffs of the Central Powers are well content to horrify the world if at the same time they can terrorize it.

If, then, the Central Powers succeed, it will be to methods like these that they will owe their success. How can any reform of international relations be based on a peace thus obtained? Such a peace would represent the triumph of all the forces which make war certain and make it brutal. It would advertise the futility of all the methods on which civilization relies to eliminate the occasions of international dispute and to mitigate their ferocity.

Germany and Austria made the present war inevitable by attacking the rights of one small State, and they gained their initial triumphs by violating the treaty-guarded territories of another. Are small States going to find in them their protectors or in treaties made by them a bulwark against aggression? Terrorism by land and sea will have proved itself the instrument of victory. Are the victors likely to abandon it on the appeal of neutrals? If existing treaties are no more than scraps of paper, can fresh treaties help us? If the violations of the most fundamental canons of international law be crowned with success, will it not be in vain that the assembled nations labour to improve their code? None will profit by their rules but the criminals who break them. It is those who keep them that will suffer.

Though, therefore, the people of this country share to the full the desire of the President for peace, they do not believe that peace can be durable if it be not based on the success of the Allied cause. For a durable peace can hardly be expected unless three conditions are fulfilled. The first is that the existing causes of international unrest should be as far as possible removed or weakened. The second is that the aggressive aims and the unscrupulous methods of the Central Powers should fall into disrepute among their own peoples. The third is that behind international law and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardest aggressor. These conditions may be difficult of fulfilment. But we believe them to be in general harmony with the President's ideals, and we are confident that none of them can be satisfied, even imperfectly, unless peace be secured on the general lines indicated (so far as Europe is concerned) in the joint note. Therefore it is that this country has made, is making, and is prepared to make sacrifices of blood and treasure unparalleled in its history. It bears these heavy burdens, not merely that it may thus fulfil its treaty obligations, nor yet that it may secure a barren triumph of one group of nations over another. It bears them because it firmly believes that on the success of the Allies depend

the prospects of peaceful civilization and of those international reforms which the best thinkers of the New World, as of the Old, dare to hope may follow on the cessation of our present calamities.

I am, with great truth and respect, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient, humble servant,

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.

Kaiser Wilhelm's Proclamation to the German People, January 13, 1917¹

Our enemies have dropped the mask. After refusing with scorn and hypocritical words of love for peace and humanity our honest peace offer, they now, in their reply to the United States, have gone beyond that and admitted their lust for conquest, the baseness of which is further enhanced by their calumnious assertions. Their aim is the crushing of Germany, the dismemberment of the Powers allied with us, and the enslavement of the freedom of Europe and the seas, under the same yoke that Greece, with gnashing of teeth, is now enduring. But what they, in thirty months of the bloodiest fighting and unscrupulous economic war could not achieve, they will also in all the future not accomplish.

Our glorious victories and our iron strength of will, with which our fighting people at the front and at home have borne all hardships and distress, guarantee that also in the future our beloved Fatherland has nothing to fear. Burning indignation and holy wrath will redouble the strength of every German man and woman, whether it is devoted to fighting, work, or suffering. We are ready for all sacrifices. The God who planted His glorious spirit of freedom in our brave people's heart will also give us and our loyal Allies, tested in battle, full victory over all the enemy lust for power and rage for destruction.

WILHELM, I. R.

Statement of Francesco Ruffini, Italian Minister of Public Instruction, Rome, January 14, 1917²

In the note of the Allies to President Wilson, they make a point which is understandable to neutrals, and particularly to America. Italy,

¹*The Times*, London, January 15, 1917.

²*The New York Times*, January 16, 1917.

no less than her allies, awaits with calm confidence the realization of the aims set forth in that passage of the note which refers to the redemption of Italians subject to Austria. The German press seeks to depict Italy as desirous of conquests, but American public opinion, so far-seeing, so well educated to freedom and to a deep spirit of national unity, can not confound brutal lust of conquest with a justified claim to territories with populations like those of the Trentino, Istria and Dalmatia.

These territories have had only one civilization in their history, that of Italy, and only one great humiliation—which must cease—that of foreign domination which attempted to destroy the principle of nationality. America knows well that Italy, notwithstanding these just claims, abstained from any provocation before the European conflagration, being occupied only with her peaceful development. Austria was responsible for the outbreak of the conflict, having willed war with Serbia after provoking Italy one hundred times with violent persecution of Italians of Trent, Trieste, Fiume and Zara, whom she denied even the right to educate themselves in their own language.

Once the conflagration was ignited, Italy felt that fate called her to complete her national unity and resume her just and holy work and her wars of independence, which have been studied with such enthusiasm by your illustrious American historians. Only those who are ignorant of the history of Austria's violent usurpations were surprised by Italy's action, initiated by her victorious armies, or considered her just claims to be ambition for conquest. Italy faced the terrible sacrifices of blood and riches imposed by the war with that same religious spirit which animated all the deeds of her national resurrection, of which America's attainment of independence was so full.

Italy counts on the considered and tranquil judgment of American public opinion which, while justly desiring the return of peace, can not, if it examines the origin of the conflict and the problem raised thereby, wish that the European equilibrium, broken by violence in 1914, be replaced to-day by a premature and unfruitful peace containing the germs of graver conflicts in the future.

Persian Reply to President Wilson's Peace Note, January 15, 1917¹

His Imperial Majesty's Government has instructed me to communicate to your Excellency that it experienced the utmost pleasure upon

¹*The New York Times*, January 16, 1917.

receipt of the President's note of December 18, 1916, regarding peace terms transmitted through the United States plenipotentiary at Teheran, and to express to you the hope that a step so benevolent and humane will meet with the success it deserves.

I am further instructed to say that, notwithstanding we declared ourselves neutral, a large part of our country has been disturbed and devastated by the fighting of the belligerents within our boundaries. In view of this fact you can not doubt that we heartily welcome and indorse the move the President has made.

Furthermore, inasmuch as His Majesty's Government understands from the President's note that he desires the preservation of the integrity and freedom of the powers and the weaker nations, and in view of the firm friendship which has always existed between our two countries, it ardently hopes that the Government of the United States will assist our oppressed nation to maintain its integrity and rights, not only for the present, but whenever a peace conference shall take place.

**Extract from the Reply of the Greek Government to President
Wilson's Peace Note, January 16, 1917¹**

The Royal Government learns with the most lively interest of the steps which the President of the United States of America has just undertaken among the belligerents for the cessation of a long and cruel war which is ravishing humanity. Very sensitive to the communication made to it, the Royal Government deeply appreciates the generous courage as well as the extremely humanitarian and profoundly politic spirit which dictated that suggestion. The considerations given in it to the subject of the sufferings of neutral nations as a result of the colossal struggle, as well as guarantees which will be equally desired by both belligerent factions for the rights and privileges of all States, have particularly found a sympathetic echo in the soul of Greece. In fact, there is no country which, like Greece, has had to suffer from this war, while at the same time remaining a stranger to it.

Through circumstances exceptionally tragic, she has less than other neutral countries been able to escape a direct and pernicious effect from the hostilities between the belligerents. Her geographical posi-

¹*The New York Times*, January 17, 1917. For the reply of King Constantine, see *ante*, p. 42.

tion contributed toward diminishing her power of resistance against violations of her neutrality and sovereignty, which she has been forced to submit to in the interest of self-preservation.

The Royal Government would certainly have made all haste to accede to the noble demand of the President of the United States of America, to help with all means in its power until success were achieved, if it were not entirely out of communication with one of the two belligerents, while toward the other it must await the solution of difficulties which seriously weigh upon the situation in Greece. But the Royal Government is following with all the intensity of its soul the precious effort of the President of the United States of America, hoping to see it completed at the earliest possible moment.

President Wilson's Address to the Senate, January 22, 1917¹

Mr. President and gentlemen of the Senate: On the eighteenth of December last I addressed an identic note to the governments of the nations now at war requesting them to state, more definitely than they had yet been stated by either group of belligerents, the terms upon which they would deem it possible to make peace. I spoke on behalf of humanity and of the rights of all neutral nations like our own, many of whose most vital interests the war puts in constant jeopardy. The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace. The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely and have stated, in general terms, indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement. We are that much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war. We are that much nearer the discussion of the international concert which must thereafter hold the world at peace. In every discussion of the peace that must end this war it is taken for granted that that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man must take that for granted.

I have sought this opportunity to address you because I thought that I owed it to you, as the council associated with me in the final determination of our international obligations, to disclose to you without reserve the thought and purpose that have been taking form in

¹*Congressional Record*, January 22, 1917, p. 1947.

my mind in regard to the duty of our Government in the days to come when it will be necessary to lay afresh and upon a new plan the foundations of peace among the nations.

It is inconceivable that the people of the United States should play no part in that great enterprise. To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and the approved practices of their Government ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honorable hope that it might in all that it was and did show mankind the way to liberty. They can not in honor withhold the service to which they are now about to be challenged. They do not wish to withhold it. But they owe it to themselves and to the other nations of the world to state the conditions under which they will feel free to render it.

That service is nothing less than this, to add their authority and their power to the authority and force of other nations to guarantee peace and justice throughout the world. Such a settlement can not now be long postponed. It is right that before it comes this Government should frankly formulate the conditions upon which it would feel justified in asking our people to approve its formal and solemn adherence to a League for Peace. I am here to attempt to state those conditions.

The present war must first be ended; but we owe it to candor and to a just regard for the opinion of mankind to say that, so far as our participation in guarantees of future peace is concerned, it makes a great deal of difference in what way and upon what terms it is ended. The treaties and agreements which bring it to an end must embody terms which will create a peace that is worth guaranteeing and preserving, a peace that will win the approval of mankind, not merely a peace that will serve the several interests and immediate aims of the nations engaged. We shall have no voice in determining what those terms shall be, but we shall, I feel sure, have a voice in determining whether they shall be made lasting or not by the guarantees of a universal covenant; and our judgment upon what is fundamental and essential as a condition precedent to permanency should be spoken now, not afterwards when it may be too late.

No covenant of cooperative peace that does not include the peoples of the New World can suffice to keep the future safe against war; and yet there is only one sort of peace that the peoples of America could join in guaranteeing. The elements of that peace must be elements that engage the confidence and satisfy the principles of the

American governments, elements consistent with their political faith and the practical convictions which the peoples of America have once for all embraced and undertaken to defend.

I do not mean to say that any American government would throw any obstacle in the way of any terms of peace the governments now at war might agree upon, or seek to upset them when made, whatever they might be. I only take it for granted that mere terms of peace between the belligerents will not satisfy even the belligerents themselves. Mere agreements may not make peace secure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected that no nation, no probable combination of nations could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.

The terms of the immediate peace agreed upon will determine whether it is a peace for which such a guarantee can be secured. The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the world depends is this: Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace, or only for a new balance of power? If it be only a struggle for a new balance of power, who will guarantee, who can guarantee, the stable equilibrium of the new arrangement? Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.

Fortunately we have received very explicit assurances on this point. The statesmen of both of the groups of nations now arrayed against one another have said, in terms that could not be misinterpreted, that it was no part of the purpose they had in mind to crush their antagonists. But the implications of these assurances may not be equally clear to all,—may not be the same on both sides of the water. I think it will be serviceable if I attempt to set forth what we understand them to be.

They imply, first of all, that it must be a peace without victory. It is not pleasant to say this. I beg that I may be permitted to put my own interpretation upon it and that it may be understood that no other interpretation was in my thought. I am seeking only to face realities and to face them without soft concealments. Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at an intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter

memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last. Only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit. The right state of mind, the right feeling between nations, is as necessary for a lasting peace as is the just settlement of vexed questions of territory or of racial and national allegiance.

The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded if it is to last must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak. Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend. Equality of territory or of resources there of course can not be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not for equipoises of power.

And there is a deeper thing involved than even equality of right among organized nations. No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property. I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

I speak of this, not because of any desire to exalt an abstract political principle which has always been held very dear by those who have sought to build up liberty in America, but for the same reason that I have spoken of the other conditions of peace which seem to me clearly indispensable,—because I wish frankly to uncover realities. Any peace which does not recognize and accept this principle will inevitably be upset. It will not rest upon the affections or the convictions of mankind. The ferment of spirit of whole populations will fight subtly and constantly against it, and all the world will sympathize. The world can be at peace only if its life is stable, and there can be no stability where the will is in rebellion, where there is not tranquillity of spirit and a sense of justice, of freedom, and of right.

So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea. Where this can not be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity of arrangement no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce.

And the paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality, and cooperation. No doubt a somewhat radical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto thought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind, but the motive for such changes is convincing and compelling. There can be no trust or intimacy between the peoples of the world without them. The free, constant, unthreatened intercourse of nations is an essential part of the process of peace and of development. It need not be difficult either to define or to secure the freedom of the seas if the governments of the world sincerely desire to come to an agreement concerning it.

It is a problem closely connected with the limitation of naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the seas at once free and safe. And the question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies and of all programs of military preparation. Difficult and delicate as these questions are, they must be faced with the utmost candor and decided in a spirit of real accommodation if peace is to come with healing in its wings, and come to stay. Peace can not be had without concession and sacrifice. There can be no sense of safety and equality among the nations if great preponderating armaments are henceforth to continue here and there to be built up and maintained. The statesmen of the world must plan for peace and nations must adjust and accommodate their policy to it as they have planned for war and made ready for pitiless contest and rivalry. The question of armaments, whether on land or sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind.

I have spoken upon these great matters without reserve and with the utmost explicitness because it has seemed to me to be necessary if the world's yearning desire for peace was anywhere to find free

voice and utterance. Perhaps I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back. I am speaking as an individual, and yet I am speaking also, of course, as the responsible head of a great government, and I feel confident that I have said what the people of the United States would wish me to say. May I not add that I hope and believe that I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every program of liberty? I would fain believe that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have as yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin they see to have come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear.

And in holding out the expectation that the people and Government of the United States will join the other civilized nations of the world in guaranteeing the permanence of peace upon such terms as I have named, I speak with the greater boldness and confidence because it is clear to every man who can think that there is in this promise no breach in either our traditions or our policy as a nation, but a fulfilment, rather, of all that we have professed or striven for.

I am proposing, as it were, that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.

I am proposing that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances which would draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without. There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection.

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed; that freedom of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty; and that moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward

looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.

**Speech of Viscount Mctono, Japanese Minister for Foreign Affairs,
in the Diet, January 23, 1917¹**

The great war which has been ravaging Europe for two years and a half is an event without precedent in the history of humanity. Without doubt it will have incalculable effect upon the destiny of nations in the future; on the issue of this war will hang the liberty of nations. The question is whether the small and the great nations of Europe will be subjugated by Germany or not.

You all know the origin of the present war. The impossible demands of Austria-Hungary upon Serbia were apparently the cause of the taking up of arms by European nations, but the real cause was Germany's ambition for world domination for which preparations were being made for many years past. Germany cherishing great ambitions for the distant future, had seized upon Tsingtau in 1898 with the view of gobbling up the whole of China in time. That this has been so nobody will contend to-day. The great pan-Germanist propaganda, the elaborate and marvelous military preparations, these are no longer a secret.

In the summer of 1914 Germany thought that the time had come for imposing upon the world a powerful German domination; she thought that in a couple of months there would be an end of her enemies' resistance. All calculations were baffled and now at the end of two years and a half she finds herself forced to pursue the struggle anew.

Japan, at the first appeal from Great Britain, did not hesitate for a moment in coming to her aid; she has loyally accomplished her duty by her ally, our army and navy succeeded in a few months in bringing to naught the German resistance in our part of the world. In destroying the bases of German activity in China, Japan has secured the order and tranquillity of the extreme East. In cooperating with Great Britain in the destroying of the German fleet in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans Japan has greatly contributed to the assuring of the safety of mercantile trade in these seas not only for Japan and Great Britain but for all nations, allied and neutral. At a time when our enemies do not recoil from the most horrible means of destroy-

¹Furnished by the Imperial Japanese Embassy at Washington.

ing the trade by sea of the nations, the Pacific and the Indian oceans are free from German brigandage. I am persuaded that the civilized world will do us justice for the services rendered by Japan to the cause of humanity at large.

In declaring war on Germany and in acceding to the Declaration of London of the 5th of September, 1914, Japan has made her position clear in the formidable struggle. We have taken part in this war not merely for the defence of our particular interests but also for the defence of those of our allies, as well as the interests of humanity in general.

It is necessary that righteousness and justice should emerge victorious out of this merciless struggle; it is necessary that the world should be given to live in all tranquillity after this cataclysm. In order to attain this noble end there must be before everything a victory complete and definitive for our allied powers. Without a complete victory it need scarcely be remarked that the peace of the Far East for which we have made all manner of sacrifices will remain in real danger. And for obtaining this victory a sacred union not only of all the governments but also of the peoples ranged on our side in defence of the inseparable rights of humanity, is an essential condition.

In consenting to take part in this war, Japan was under the obligation, in view of her particular position in Asia, of limiting from the beginning her sphere of military action; but after having faithfully accomplished the task incumbent upon her she has made and will ever make every effort toward the attainment of the final victory by her allies. The struggle between the allies and the common enemies is not one simply of military and naval forces, but it is a struggle extending over all spheres of human activities. It is the reason why we should march forward in every direction in an accord as complete as possible. Hence it is that we have adhered to the resolutions of the Economic Conference of Paris. It is for that reason again that the Imperial Government have taken some administrative measures with a view to safeguarding our common interests in the matter of postal and telegraphic communications. It is also with that end in view that the Government are contemplating to take other and different measures in consequence of the Economic Conference. It was further for the purpose of keeping in more complete accord with our allies that the Imperial Government gave a prompt assent to the project of the response, proposed by the French Government in the name of the allies, to the German and American notes. The rea-

sons that caused our refusal toward the German proposal have been clearly stated in the identic note. The Imperial Government consider with the allied governments that the pretensions of the hostile governments are inadmissible and that the time has not yet come for entering upon peace negotiations. With your permission I will next say a few words in regard to our reply to the American note. While highly approving the elevated sentiments which inspired this *démarche* of the American Government, the allied governments did not feel bound to accede to the desire of peace expressed by that government. The reasons for this decision on their part were set forth in the note forwarded in Paris to the American Ambassador by the French Government in the name of the allied powers. In the reply to the American Government, the allied powers state a certain number of conditions which they consider it indispensable to impose on the hostile governments on the occasion of the conclusion of peace. The absence of all reference to the future disposition of the German colonies has justly attracted the attention of the Japanese public, neither has it escaped the notice of the Imperial Government. The reply to the American note by no means contains all the conditions of peace. The allied powers have reserved the right to present the conditions in detail at the time of the peace negotiations. This last point is indicated in the note to America. The Imperial Government, when they adhered to the project of the response to the American note, knew that the allied powers had not neglected to take into proper consideration the just claims which Japan would present at the peace negotiations. Nevertheless to clear away all misunderstanding on this point, we took the necessary measures, in sending our reply of adhesion to the French Government, for safeguarding our rights, and I am happy to be able to assure you that a most satisfactory understanding exists on this subject among all the allies at a moment when the allied powers have taken the decision of continuing the war until the victory of justice and righteousness as well as true peace of the world has been realized. I would most eagerly express our sentiments of the most sincere appreciation for the efforts displayed by Great Britain, France, Russia, Italy, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro and Roumania. At the same time I would express our most profound admiration for their brave armies and navies. I also wish to testify to our hearty sympathy for the inhabitants of the regions fouled by the foot of the cruel and barbarous invaders and I am firmly persuaded that a future more glorious is in store for these unfortunate peoples.

It is needless for me to state that our alliance with Great Britain is the basis of our foreign policy. The present war has demonstrated the solidity as well as the benefits of this alliance. The Japanese and the British people have realized in the most evident manner the necessity of this alliance for the protection of the rights and interests of the two empires. It is at the same time an essential guaranty for the maintenance of the order and peace of the extreme Orient.

We must also felicitate ourselves upon the understanding signed between Japan and Russia in July, 1916. All the succeeding cabinets of Japan since the end of the Russian war have pursued the policy of *rapprochement* with that nation. The two governments of Japan and Russia saw the necessity of this policy immediately after the conclusion of peace. Inaugurated by our first entente in 1907, this policy has been uniformly pursued and enhanced by the successive ententes which finally led to the Convention of 1916, concluded amidst events destined to produce incalculable consequences upon Russia. This convention has had the effect of enlightening the public opinion of Russia to the perception of the sincerity of the Japanese sentiments. I do not hesitate to state to you that the government and people of Russia testify a profound sense of gratitude to Japan for the great services rendered to Russia in our furnishing her with ammunitions which facilitated her military operations. Having been a personal observer for more than two years of the evolution of the Russian mentality, I believe I am able to affirm to you that the Russian nation entertain the most sincere and frank amity toward Japan. Japan and Russia have great interests in common to be safeguarded in the Far East. This intimate accord between the two nations, no less than the Anglo-Japanese alliance, constitutes an indispensable guaranty for peace in our part of the world in spite of the troubled times amidst which we find ourselves.

I am happy to be able to state to you that our relations with the neutral powers are more than ever cordial. I am persuaded that all the neutral nations will do us full justice for the immense service done by our navy for their foreign commerce. If we had not, in concert with the British navy, destroyed the German fleet in the Pacific, where would the maritime commerce of the neutral countries be, especially of countries such as America, Australia and China, which border upon the Pacific? I am firmly convinced that all the neutral powers that have profited by the security of the seas assured by the two navies, will recognize the justice of what I have just stated to you.

You are aware that Japan has always preserved the most sincerely amicable relations with the government and the people of America, though from time to time there have been light clouds which have cast a shadow upon our relations though ever so little. These clouds have generally been dissipated by the common good-will of the two governments. There certainly have been questions about which the two governments could not come to a complete accord, but that will be the case between even the best of allies. However, when one faces the most thorny questions in a friendly and frank spirit, with the will of solving them in an amicable and conciliatory manner, there will surely be found a way to an understanding. It is this end that the two governments have always pursued to the great satisfaction of our two countries. It affords me great pleasure to state that there have been symptoms of more real sympathy manifested of late between the countries. As one instance we have been approached by the American capitalists for cooperation in financial affairs in China. The Imperial Government are watching with lively interest the further development of the economic *rapprochement* between the two countries.

I would not speak of all the events that have come to pass in China in recent years, which must be still fresh in your memory. We must recognize that as the result of these events there has been created a certain atmosphere which is not altogether desirable. It is for the good of our two countries that this state of things should absolutely disappear. In view of the great political and economic interests which Japan possesses in China, it has always been the sincere desire of this country to see her neighbor developed along the paths of modern civilization and we have spared no efforts for that purpose. It was for that purpose also that we sent to China a number of civil and military advisors, and that we concurred with other countries in furnishing China with the financial means of accomplishing reforms of every kind and also that we undertook the education and instruction of the young Chinese students who are coming to Japan by thousands. Nobody would contradict me when I say that China certainly is indebted much to Japan in her work of reorganization pursued for several years. Why is it that in spite of all our well-meant efforts, China seems often to regard us with mistrust and even animosity? There may be many causes for that, but the chief reason, to my mind, is the tendency on the part of the Japanese towards interference in China's internal quarrels since the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty and the establishment of the republican *régime*. There have since been formed in China a number of political parties, for one or another

of which parties there have been some Japanese who have expressed sympathy. These persons have developed marked tendency towards a desire to help these political parties to obtain power according as their own political opinions or personal sympathy dictate. I am persuaded that all these persons are perfectly sincere in their desire of helping our neighboring friends, but the results were deplorable. To what did our attitude at the moment of the formation of the Republic lead, and to what did all the movements inimical to the President lead? You are aware of it so well that I need not dwell upon it. But what I have to state is that in the wake of all these facts we have had no other results than to invite, on the one hand, the animosity of our neighbors and, on the other, to cause other nations' misunderstanding of the real intentions of Japan. I do not hesitate to state that the present Cabinet absolutely repudiate this mode of action. We desire to maintain the most cordial relations with China. We desire nothing more than the gradual accomplishment by China of all her schemes of reform, and we shall leave nothing undone in order to help her in the task, if she so desires. Endeavors shall not be wanting on our part to make China comprehend the sincerity of our sentiments toward her, though it must always remain with China whether she should have faith in us or not. We have not the least intention, I formally declare hereby, of favoring this or that political party in China; all we desire is the maintenance of cordial relations of amity with China herself and not with any political party. It is essential that China should develop herself smoothly along the path of progress and we dread nothing more than the possible disintegration of China through her continued troubles. We must put forth every effort to prevent that sad possibility, for nothing is more indispensable than that China should maintain her independence and territorial integrity. The other point to which the government must call your attention is the special position occupied by Japan in certain portions of China. I am speaking especially of South Manchuria and East Inner Mongolia. Our special situation in these parts has been acquired at the cost of immense sacrifice and immeasurable efforts on our part and on the strength of this circumstance our rights and interests in these parts have been consecrated by treaties and arrangements. It is therefore the most elementary duty of the Imperial Government toward the nation to safeguard these rights and interests. In the same way it is necessary that China should comprehend that it is not only a matter of compliance with international duty that China should respect these rights and interests of Japan, but it would be

nothing more than the realization of the good understanding between our two countries.

If China would continue, as we sincerely desire she would, relations of the greatest confidence and amity with Japan, it is necessary that she should follow the same lines of conduct as those we intend to follow with her. It is on this condition alone that anything like a firm understanding can exist between us. The Imperial Government have the strongest conviction that if the Chinese Government understood the pure and clear intentions of Japan, China would not have any objection to Japan's sincere policy of good understanding in the relations between Japan and China. Nobody certainly would dispute the fact that Japan occupies a peculiar position in China as well on account of her geographic position as her political and economic interests; but we must not any more ignore the fact that other powers have likewise immense interests in China. We must, therefore, while safeguarding our own interests there, take care to respect those of other nations. We must before everything try to move in accord with powers with which we are under the pledge of special arrangements and in a general way endeavor to reconcile our interests with those of others. We are firmly convinced that such is the line of conduct best suited to the common interests of all powers concerned. Japan has not any intention to follow an egoistic policy in China. It is her sincere desire to keep in complete accord with the countries concerned, and the Imperial Government firmly believe that with good-will on both sides we shall be able to arrive at a complete understanding which will be for the best interests both of China and all other countries.

Extract from the Speech of Bonar Law, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Bristol, England, January 24, 1917¹

We are working for, looking forward to peace. The Germans the other day made us what they call an offer of peace. It received from the Allied Governments the only reply which was possible. You have read the speech made by President Wilson. It was a frank speech, and it is right that any member of an Allied Government who refers to it should speak frankly too. It is impossible that he and we can look on this question from the same point of view. Whatever his private feeling may be, the head of a great neutral State must take a neutral attitude. America is very far removed from the horrors of

¹*The Times*, London, January 25, 1917.

this war; we are in the midst of it. America is neutral; we are not neutral. We believe that the essence of this conflict is the question, which is as old as time, of the difference between right and wrong. We know that this is a war of naked aggression. We know that the crimes which have accompanied the conduct of the war—crimes almost incredible after 2,000 years of Christianity—are small in comparison with the initial crime by which the men responsible for the policy of Germany with cold-blooded calculation, because they thought it would pay, plunged the world into the horrors we are enduring.

President Wilson's aim is to have peace now and security for peace in the future. That is our aim also, and it is our only aim. He hopes to secure it by means of a league of peace among the nations, and he is trying to get the American Senate to do something to make this possible. It would not be right, in my opinion, for us to look upon that suggestion as altogether Utopian. You know that until quite recently duelling was common. Now the idea that private quarrels should be settled by the sword is unthinkable. But, after all, it is for us not an abstract question for the future. It is a question of life or death now; and whether we consider that the aim which he and we have in common can be secured by his methods, we can not forget the past. For generations humane men, men of good-will among all nations have striven, by Hague Conventions, by peace conferences, by every means, to make war impossible. I said humane men. They have striven, if not to make it impossible, to mitigate its horrors and to see how the barriers against barbarism could be maintained.

At the outbreak of war Germany swept aside every one of those barriers and tore up the scraps of paper which she had solemnly signed. She spread mines in the open sea; on sea and land she committed atrocities, incredible atrocities, contrary to conventions which she had herself signed. At this moment she is driving the populations of enemy territory into slavery, and, worse than that, in some cases she is making the subjects of the Allies take up arms against their own country. All that has happened and no neutral country has been able to stop it, and, more than that, no neutral country has made any protest, at least no effective protest. It is for us a question of life or death. We must have stronger guarantees for the future peace of the world.

We have rejected the proposal to enter into peace negotiations not from any lust of conquest, not from any longing for shining victories; we have rejected it not from any feeling of vindictiveness or even a desire for revenge; we have rejected it because peace now would mean

peace based upon a German victory. It would mean a military machine which is still unbroken, it would mean also that that machine would be in the hands of a nation prepared for war, who would set about preparing for it again, and, at their own time, plunge us again into the miseries which we are enduring to-day. What President Wilson is longing for we are fighting for. . . .

Our sons and brothers are dying for it, and we mean to secure it. The heart of the people of our country is longing for peace. We are praying for peace, a peace that will bring back in safety those who are dear to us, but a peace which will mean this—that those who will never come back shall not have laid down their lives in vain.

**Speech of Premier Tisza in the Hungarian Parliament,
January 25, 1917¹**

Pursuant to our peaceful policy before the war and our attitude during the war, as well as our recent peace action, we can only greet with sympathy every effort aiming at the restoration of peace. We are, therefore, inclined to continue a further exchange of views regarding peace with the United States Government. This exchange must naturally occur in agreement with our allies.

In view of the fact that President Wilson in his address makes certain distinctions between our reply and our enemies' reply, I must especially state that the quadruple alliance declares that it is inclined to enter into peace negotiations, but that at the same time it will propose terms which, in its opinion, are acceptable for the enemy and calculated to serve as a basis for a lasting peace.

On the other hand, the conditions of peace contained in our enemies' reply to the United States are equivalent at least to the disintegration of our monarchy and of the Ottoman Empire. This amounts to an official announcement that the war aims at our destruction, and we are, therefore, forced to resist with our utmost strength as long as this is the war aim of our enemies.

In such circumstances it can not be doubted which group of powers by its attitude is the obstacle to peace, and this group approximates to President Wilson's conception. The President opposes a peace imposed by a conqueror, which one party would regard as a humiliation and an intolerable sacrifice. From this it follows clearly that so long as the powers opposed to us do not substantially change their war

¹*The New York Times*, January 26, 1917.

aims an antagonism that can not be bridged stands between their viewpoint and the President's peace aims.

My second observation has to do with the principle of nationalities. I desire to be brief; therefore, I will not dilate on the question of what moral justification England and Russia have to lay stress on the principle of nationalities in a peace program which would destroy the Hungarian nation and deliver the Mohammedan population of the Bosphorus region into Russian domination. But I say that the whole public opinion in Hungary holds to the principle of nationalities in honor.

The principle of nationalities in the formation of national States, however, can only prevail unrestrictedly where single nations live within sharply marked ethnographical boundaries in compact masses and in regions suited to the organization of a State. In territories where various races live intermingled it is impossible that every single race can form a national State. In such territories it would only be possible to create a State without national character, or one in which a race by its numbers and importance predominates, thus imprinting its national character.

In such circumstances, therefore, only that limited realization of the principle of nationalities is possible which the President of the United States rightfully expresses in demanding that security of life and religion and individual and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples. I believe that nowhere is this demand realized to such a degree as in both States of the monarchy. I believe that in the regions of Southeastern Europe, which are inhabited by a varied mixture of peoples and nations, the demand for free development of nations can not be more completely realized than it is by the existence and domination of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

We feel ourselves, therefore, completely in agreement with the President's demands. We shall strive for the realization as far as possible of this principle in the regions lying in our immediate neighborhood. I can only repeat that, true to our traditional foreign policy and true to the standpoint we took in our peace action in conjunction with our allies, we are ready to do everything that will guarantee to the peoples of Europe the blessings of a lasting peace.

I beg you to take cognizance of my reply.

**German Note to the United States regarding the Submarine
Blockade, January 31, 1917¹**

[TRANSLATION]

GERMAN EMBASSY,

Washington, January 31, 1917.

MR. SECRETARY OF STATE: Your Excellency was good enough to transmit to the Imperial Government a copy of the message which the President of the United States of America addressed to the Senate on the 22, inst. The Imperial Government has given it the earnest consideration which the President's statements deserve, inspired as they are, by a deep sentiment of responsibility. It is highly gratifying to the Imperial Government to ascertain that the main tendencies of this important statement correspond largely to the desires and principles professed by Germany. These principles especially include self-government and equality of rights for all nations. Germany would be sincerely glad if in recognition of this principle countries like Ireland and India, which do not enjoy the benefits of political independence, should now obtain their freedom. The German people also repudiate all alliances which serve to force the countries into a competition for might and to involve them in a net of selfish intrigues. On the other hand Germany will gladly cooperate in all efforts to prevent future wars. The freedom of the seas, being a preliminary condition of the free existence of nations and the peaceful intercourse between them, as well as the open door for the commerce of all nations, has always formed part of the leading principles of Germany's political program. All the more the Imperial Government regrets that the attitude of her enemies who are so entirely opposed to peace makes it impossible for the world at present to bring about the realization of these lofty ideals. Germany and her allies were ready to enter now into a discussion of peace and had set down as basis the guaranty of existence, honor and free development of their peoples. Their aims, as has been expressly stated in the note of December 12, 1916, were not directed towards the destruction or annihilation of their enemies and were according to their conviction perfectly compatible with the rights of the other nations. As to Belgium for which such warm and cordial sympathy is felt in the United States, the Chancellor had declared only a few weeks previously that its annexation had never formed part of Germany's intentions. The peace to be signed with Belgium was to provide for such conditions

¹Official print of the Department of State.

in that country, with which Germany desires to maintain friendly neighborly relations, that Belgium should not be used again by Germany's enemies for the purpose of instigating continuous hostile intrigues. Such precautionary measures are all the more necessary, as Germany's enemies have repeatedly stated not only in speeches delivered by their leading men, but also in the statutes of the economical conference in Paris, that it is their intention not to treat Germany as an equal, even after peace has been restored but to continue their hostile attitude and especially to wage a systematical economical war against her.

The attempt of the four allied powers to bring about peace has failed owing to the lust of conquest of their enemies, who desired to dictate the conditions of peace. Under the pretense of following the principle of nationality our enemies have disclosed their real aims in this war, viz., to dismember and dishonor Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria. To the wish of reconciliation they oppose the will of destruction. They desire a fight to the bitter end.

A new situation has thus been created which forces Germany to new decisions. Since two years and a half England is using her naval power for a criminal attempt to force Germany into submission by starvation. In brutal contempt of international law the group of Powers led by England does not only curtail the legitimate trade of their opponents but they also by ruthless pressure compel neutral countries either to altogether forego every trade not agreeable to the Entente Powers or to limit it according to their arbitrary decrees. The American Government knows the steps which have been taken to cause England and her allies to return to the rules of international law and to respect the freedom of the seas. The English Government, however, insists upon continuing its war of starvation, which does not at all affect the military power of its opponents, but compels women and children, the sick and the aged to suffer, for their country, pains and privations which endanger the vitality of the nation. Thus British tyranny mercilessly increases the sufferings of the world indifferent to the laws of humanity, indifferent to the protests of the neutrals whom they severely harm, indifferent even to the silent longing for peace among England's own allies. Each day of the terrible struggle causes new destruction, new sufferings. Each day shortening the war will, on both sides, preserve the life of thousands of brave soldiers and be a benefit to mankind.

The Imperial Government could not justify before its own conscience, before the German people and before history the neglect of

any means destined to bring about the end of the war. Like the President of the United States, the Imperial Government had hoped to reach this goal by negotiations. After the attempts to come to an understanding with the Entente Powers have been answered by the latter with the announcement of an intensified continuation of the war, the Imperial Government—in order to serve the welfare of mankind in a higher sense and not to wrong its own people—is now compelled to continue the fight for existence, again forced upon it, with the full employment of all the weapons which are at its disposal.

Sincerely trusting that the people and Government of the United States will understand the motives for this decision and its necessity, the Imperial Government hopes that the United States may view the new situation from the lofty heights of impartiality and assist, on their part, to prevent further misery and avoidable sacrifice of human life.

Enclosing two memoranda regarding the details of the contemplated military measures at sea, I remain, etc.,

(Signed) J. BERNSTORFF.

[INCLOSURE 1]

MEMORANDUM

After bluntly refusing Germany's peace offer the Entente Powers, stated in their note addressed to the American Government, that they are determined to continue the war in order to deprive Germany of German provinces in the West and the East, to destroy Austria-Hungary and to annihilate Turkey. In waging war with such aims, the Entente Allies are violating all rules of international law, as they prevent the legitimate trade of neutrals with the Central Powers, and of the neutrals among themselves. Germany has, so far, not made unrestricted use of the weapon which she possesses in her submarines. Since the Entente Powers, however, have made it impossible to come to an understanding based upon equality of rights of all nations, as proposed by the Central Powers and have instead declared only such a peace to be possible, which shall be dictated by the Entente Allies and shall result in the destruction and humiliation of the Central Powers, Germany is unable further to forego the full use of her submarines. The Imperial Government, therefore, does not doubt that the Government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the Entente Allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the Central Powers, and that the Government of the United States will further realize that the

now openly disclosed intentions of the Entente Allies give back to Germany the freedom of the action which she reserved in her note addressed to the Government of the United States on May 4, 1916.

Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by forcibly preventing after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France, Italy and in the Eastern Mediterranean all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to England and from and to France, etc., etc. All ships met within that zone will be sunk.

The Imperial Government is confident that this measure will result in a speedy termination of the war and in the restoration of peace which the Government of the United States has so much at heart. Like the Government of the United States, Germany and her allies had hoped to reach this goal by negotiations. Now that the war, through the fault of Germany's enemies, has to be continued, the Imperial Government feels sure that the Government of the United States will understand the necessity of adopting such measures and are destined to bring about a speedy end of the horrible and useless bloodshed. The Imperial Government hopes all the more for such an understanding of her position, as the neutrals have under the pressure of the Entente Powers, suffered great losses, being forced by them either to give up their entire trade or to limit it according to conditions arbitrarily determined by Germany's enemies in violation of international law.

[INCLOSURE 2]

MEMORANDUM

From February 1, 1917, all sea traffic will be stopped with every available weapon and without further notice in the following blockade zones around Great Britain, France, Italy and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In the North: The zone is confined by a line at a distance of 20 sea miles along the Dutch coast to Terschelling fire ship, the degree of longitude from Terschelling fire ship to Udsire, a line from there across the point 62 degrees north 0 degrees longitude to 62 degrees north 5 degrees west, further to a point 3 sea miles south of the southern point of the Faroe Islands, from there across point 62 degrees north 10 degrees west to 61 degrees north 15 degrees west, then 57 degrees north 20 degrees west to 47 degrees north 20 degrees west, further to 43 degrees north, 15 degrees west, then along the degree of latitude 43 degrees north to 20 sea miles from Cape Finisterre and

at a distance of 20 sea miles along the north coast of Spain to the French boundary.

In the South: The Mediterranean

For neutral ships remains open: The sea west of the line Pt. del'Espiquette to 38 degrees 20 minutes north and 6 degrees east, also north and west of a zone 61 sea miles wide along the north African coast, beginning at 2 degrees longitude west. For the connection of this sea zone with Greece there is provided a zone of a width of 20 sea miles north and east of the following line: 38 degrees north and 6 degrees east to 38 degrees north and 10 degrees east to 37 degrees north and 11 degrees 30 minutes east to 34 degrees north and 11 degrees 30 minutes east to 34 degrees north and 22 degrees 30 minutes east.

From there leads a zone 20 sea miles wide west of 22 degrees 30 minutes eastern longitude into Greek territorial waters.

Neutral ships navigating these blockade zones do so at their own risk. Although care has been taken, that neutral ships which are on their way toward ports of the blockade zones on February 1, 1917, and have come in the vicinity of the latter, will be spared during a sufficiently long period it is strongly advised to warn them with all available means in order to cause their return.

Neutral ships which on February 1, are in ports of the blockaded zones, can, with the same safety, leave them if they sail before February 5, 1917, and take the shortest route into safe waters.

The instructions given to the commanders of German submarines provide for a sufficiently long period during which the safety of passengers on unarmed enemy passenger ships is guaranteed.

Americans, en route to the blockade zone on enemy freight steamers, are not endangered, as the enemy shipping firms can prevent such ships in time from entering the zone.

Sailing of regular American passenger steamers may continue undisturbed after February 1, 1917, if

- a) the port of destination is Falmouth
- b) sailing to or coming from that port course is taken via the Scilly Islands and a point 50 degrees north 20 degrees west,
- c) the steamers are marked in the following way which must not be allowed to other vessels in American ports: On ships' hull and superstructure 3 vertical stripes 1 meter wide each to be painted alternately white and red. Each mast should show a large flag checkered white and red, and the stern the American national flag.

Care should be taken that, during dark, national flag and painted marks are easily recognizable from a distance and that the boats are well lighted throughout,

- d) one steamer a week sails in each direction with arrival at Falmouth on Sunday and departure from Falmouth on Wednesday
- e) The United States Government guarantees that no contraband (according to German contraband list) is carried by those steamers.

President Wilson's Address to Both Houses of Congress in Joint Session, February 3, 1917¹

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS: The Imperial German Government on the thirty-first of January announced to this Government and to the governments of the other neutral nations that on and after the first day of February, the present month, it would adopt a policy with regard to the use of submarines against all shipping seeking to pass through certain designated areas of the high seas to which it is clearly my duty to call your attention.

Let me remind the Congress that on the eighteenth of April last, in view of the sinking on the twenty-fourth of March of the cross-channel passenger steamer *Sussex* by a German submarine without summons or warning, and the consequent loss of the lives of several citizens of the United States who were passengers aboard her, this Government addressed a note to the Imperial German Government in which it made the following declaration:

"If it is still the purpose of the Imperial Government to prosecute relentless and indiscriminate warfare against vessels of commerce by the use of submarines without regard to what the Government of the United States must consider the sacred and indisputable rules of international law and the universally recognized dictates of humanity, the Government of the United States is at last forced to the conclusion that there is but one course it can pursue. Unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight-carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether."

¹*Congressional Record*, February 3, 1917, p. 1917.

In reply to this declaration the Imperial German Government gave this Government the following assurance:

"The German Government is prepared to do its utmost to confine the operations of war for the rest of its duration to the fighting forces of the belligerents, thereby also insuring the freedom of the seas, a principle upon which the German Government believes, now as before, to be in agreement with the Government of the United States.

"The German Government, guided by this idea, notifies the Government of the United States that the German naval forces have received the following orders: In accordance with the general principles of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels recognized by international law, such vessels, both within and without the area declared as naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.

"But," it added, "neutrals can not expect that Germany, forced to fight for her existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interest, restrict the use of an effective weapon if her enemy is permitted to continue to apply at will methods of warfare violating the rules of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality, and the German Government is convinced that the Government of the United States does not think of making such a demand, knowing that the Government of the United States has repeatedly declared that it is determined to restore the principle of the freedom of the seas, from whatever quarter it has been violated."

To this the Government of the United States replied on the eighth of May, accepting, of course, the assurances given, but adding,

"The Government of the United States feels it necessary to state that it takes it for granted that the Imperial German Government does not intend to imply that the maintenance of its newly announced policy is in any way contingent upon the course or result of diplomatic negotiations between the Government of the United States and any other belligerent Government, notwithstanding the fact that certain passages in the Imperial Government's note of the 4th instant might appear to be susceptible of that construction. In order, however, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Government of the United States notifies the Imperial Government that it can not for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made

contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative."

To this note of the eighth of May the Imperial German Government made no reply.

On the thirty-first of January, the Wednesday of the present week, the German Ambassador handed to the Secretary of State, along with a formal note, a memorandum which contains the following statement:

"The Imperial Government, therefore, does not doubt that the Government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the Entente Allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the Central Powers, and that the Government of the United States will further realize that the now openly disclosed intentions of the Entente Allies give back to Germany the freedom of action which she reserved in her note addressed to the Government of the United States on May 4, 1916."

"Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by forcibly preventing after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France, Italy, and in the Eastern Mediterranean all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to England and from and to France, etc., etc. All ships met within the zone will be sunk."

I think that you will agree with me that, in view of this declaration, which suddenly and without prior intimation of any kind deliberately withdraws the solemn assurance given in the Imperial Government's note of the fourth of May, 1916, this Government has no alternative consistent with the dignity and honour of the United States but to take the course which, in its note of the eighteenth of April, 1916, it announced that it would take in the event that the German Government did not declare and effect an abandonment of the methods of submarine warfare which it was then employing and to which it now purposes again to resort.

I have, therefore, directed the Secretary of State to announce to His Excellency the German Ambassador that all diplomatic relations between the United States and the German Empire are severed, and that the American Ambassador at Berlin will immediately be withdrawn; and, in accordance with this decision, to hand to His Excellency his passports.

Notwithstanding this unexpected action of the German Government, this sudden and deeply deplorable renunciation of its assur-

ances, given this Government at one of the most critical moments of tension in the relations of the two governments, I refuse to believe that it is the intention of the German authorities to do in fact what they have warned us they feel at liberty to do. I can not bring myself to believe that they will indeed pay no regard to the ancient friendship between their people and our own or to the solemn obligations which have been exchanged between them and destroy American ships and take the lives of American citizens in the wilful prosecution of the ruthless naval programme they have announced their intention to adopt. Only actual overt acts on their part can make me believe it even now.

If this inveterate confidence on my part in the sobriety and prudent foresight of their purpose should unhappily prove unfounded; if American ships and American lives should in fact be sacrificed by their naval commanders in heedless contravention of the just and reasonable understandings of international law and the obvious dictates of humanity, I shall take the liberty of coming again before the Congress, to ask that authority be given me to use any means that may be necessary for the protection of our seamen and our people in the prosecution of their peaceful and legitimate errands on the high seas. I can do nothing less. I take it for granted that all neutral governments will take the same course.

We do not desire any hostile conflict with the Imperial German Government. We are the sincere friends of the German people and earnestly desire to remain at peace with the Government which speaks for them. We shall not believe that they are hostile to us unless and until we are obliged to believe it; and we purpose nothing more than the reasonable defense of the undoubted rights of our people. We wish to serve no selfish ends. We seek merely to stand true alike in thought and in action to the immemorial principles of our people which I sought to express in my address to the Senate only two weeks ago,—seek merely to vindicate our right to liberty and justice and an unmolested life. These are the bases of peace, not war. God grant we may not be challenged to defend them by acts of wilful injustice on the part of the Government of Germany!

Severance of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and
Germany, February 3, 1917

*The Secretary of State to the German Ambassador*¹

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, February 3, 1917.

EXCELLENCY: In acknowledging the note with accompanying memoranda, which you delivered into my hands on the afternoon of January 31st, and which announced the purpose of your Government as to the future conduct of submarine warfare, I would direct your attention to the following statements appearing in the correspondence which has passed between the Government of the United States and the Imperial German Government in regard to submarine warfare.

This Government on April 18, 1916, in presenting the case of the *Sussex*, declared—

“If it is still the purpose of the Imperial Government to prosecute relentless and indiscriminate warfare against vessels of commerce by the use of submarines without regard to what the Government of the United States must consider the sacred and indisputable rules of international law and the universally recognized dictates of humanity, the Government of the United States is at last forced to the conclusion that there is but one course it can pursue. Unless the Imperial Government should now immediately declare and effect an abandonment of its present methods of submarine warfare against passenger and freight-carrying vessels, the Government of the United States can have no choice but to sever diplomatic relations with the German Empire altogether.”

In reply to the note from which the above declaration is quoted Your Excellency's Government stated in a note dated May 4, 1916—

“The German Government, guided by this idea, notifies the Government of the United States that the German naval forces have received the following orders: In accordance with the general principles of visit and search and destruction of merchant vessels recognized by international law, such vessels, both within and without the area declared as naval war zone, shall not be sunk without warning and without saving human lives, unless these ships attempt to escape or offer resistance.

“But neutrals can not expect that Germany, forced to fight for her existence, shall, for the sake of neutral interests, restrict the use of an effective weapon if her enemy is permitted to continue to

¹Official print of the Department of State.

apply at will methods of warfare violating the rules of international law. Such a demand would be incompatible with the character of neutrality, and the German Government is convinced that the Government of the United States does not think of making such a demand, knowing that the Government of the United States has repeatedly declared that it is determined to restore the principle of the freedom of the seas, from whatever quarter it has been violated."

To this reply this Government made answer on May 8, 1916, in the following language:

"The Government of the United States feels it necessary to state that it takes it for granted that the Imperial German Government does not intend to imply that the maintenance of its newly announced policy is in any way contingent upon the course or result of diplomatic negotiations between the Government of the United States and any other belligerent Government, notwithstanding the fact that certain passages in the Imperial Government's note of the 4th instant might appear to be susceptible of that construction. In order, however, to avoid any possible misunderstanding, the Government of the United States notifies the Imperial Government that it can not for a moment entertain, much less discuss, a suggestion that respect by German naval authorities for the rights of citizens of the United States upon the high seas should in any way or in the slightest degree be made contingent upon the conduct of any other Government affecting the rights of neutrals and non-combatants. Responsibility in such matters is single, not joint; absolute, not relative."

To this Government's note of May 8th no reply was made by the Imperial Government.

In one of the memoranda accompanying the note under acknowledgment, after reciting certain alleged illegal measures adopted by Germany's enemies, this statement appears:

"The Imperial Government, therefore, does not doubt that the Government of the United States will understand the situation thus forced upon Germany by the Entente Allies' brutal methods of war and by their determination to destroy the Central Powers, and that the Government of the United States will further realize that the now openly disclosed intentions of the Entente Allies give back to Germany the freedom of action which she reserved in her note addressed to the Government of the United States on May 4, 1916,

"Under these circumstances Germany will meet the illegal measures of her enemies by forcibly preventing, after February 1, 1917, in a zone around Great Britain, France, Italy, and in the eastern

Mediterranean all navigation, that of neutrals included, from and to England and from and to France, etc., etc. All ships met within the zone will be sunk."

In view of this declaration, which withdraws suddenly and without prior intimation the solemn assurance given in the Imperial Government's note of May 4, 1916, this Government has no alternative consistent with the dignity and honor of the United States but to take the course which it explicitly announced in its note of April 18, 1916, it would take in the event that the Imperial Government did not declare and effect an abandonment of the methods of submarine warfare then employed and to which the Imperial Government now purpose again to resort.

The President has, therefore, directed me to announce to Your Excellency that all diplomatic relations between the United States and the German Empire are severed, and that the American ambassador at Berlin will be immediately withdrawn, and in accordance with such announcement to deliver to Your Excellency your passports.

I have, etc.,

ROBERT LANSING.

Instructions to American Diplomatic Representatives in Neutral Countries, February 4, 1917, regarding the Severance of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Germany¹

You will immediately notify the Government to which you are accredited that the United States, because of the German Government's recent announcement of its intention to renew unrestricted submarine warfare, has no choice but to follow the course laid down in its note of April 18, 1916 (the *Sussex* note).

It has, therefore, recalled the American Ambassador to Berlin and has delivered passports to the German Ambassador to the United States.

Say, also, that the President is reluctant to believe Germany actually will carry out her threat against neutral commerce, but if it be done the President will ask Congress to authorize use of the national power to protect American citizens engaged in their peaceful and lawful errands on the seas.

The course taken is, in the President's view, entirely in conformity with the principles he enunciated in his address to the Senate January 12 (the address proposing a world league for peace).

¹*Congressional Record*, February 8, 1917, p. 3263.

He believes it will make for the peace of the world if other neutral powers can find it possible to take similar action.

Report fully and immediately on the reception of this announcement and upon the suggestion as to similar action.

**Senate Resolution of February 7, 1917, endorsing President Wilson's
Action in severing Diplomatic Relations with Germany¹**

WHEREAS the President has, for the reasons stated in his address delivered to the Congress in joint session on February 3, 1917, severed diplomatic relations with the Imperial German Government by the recall of the American Ambassador at Berlin and by handing his passports to the German Ambassador at Washington; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding this severance of diplomatic intercourse, the President has expressed his desire to avoid conflict with the Imperial German Government; and

WHEREAS the President declared in his said address that if in his judgment occasion should arise for further action in the premises on the part of the Government of the United States he would submit the matter to the Congress and ask the authority of the Congress to use such means as he might deem necessary for the protection of American seamen and people in the prosecution of their peaceful and legitimate errands on the high seas: Therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate approves the action taken by the President as set forth in his address delivered before the joint session of the Congress, as above stated.

¹*Congressional Record*. February 7, 1917, p. 3046.

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OF

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Secretary's Office

†Year Book for 1911; Year Book for 1912; Year Book for 1913-1914;
Year Book for 1915; †Year Book for 1916.

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